

Getaway

Your next family trip made easy (pg 59)
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WILD COAST

5 AMAZING ACTION TRAILS

KUALA LUMPUR

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RECOVERY
KIT

THE
ZAMBEZI
REGION

Namibia

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FRANSCHHOEK

12 self-catering spots
our expert rates

VIC FALLS

You CAN do it
on a budget! pg 139

PHOTO
SPECIAL!
FURRY
SPRING
BABIES
pg 74

OCTOBER 2015

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ON THE COVER Horseshoe Lagoon in the former Caprivi

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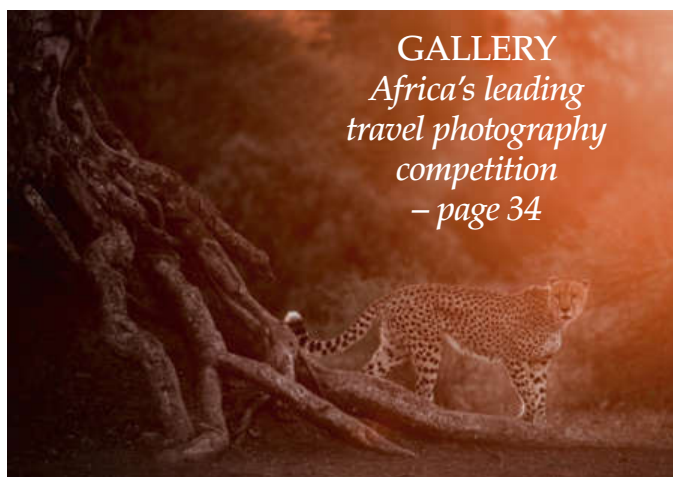
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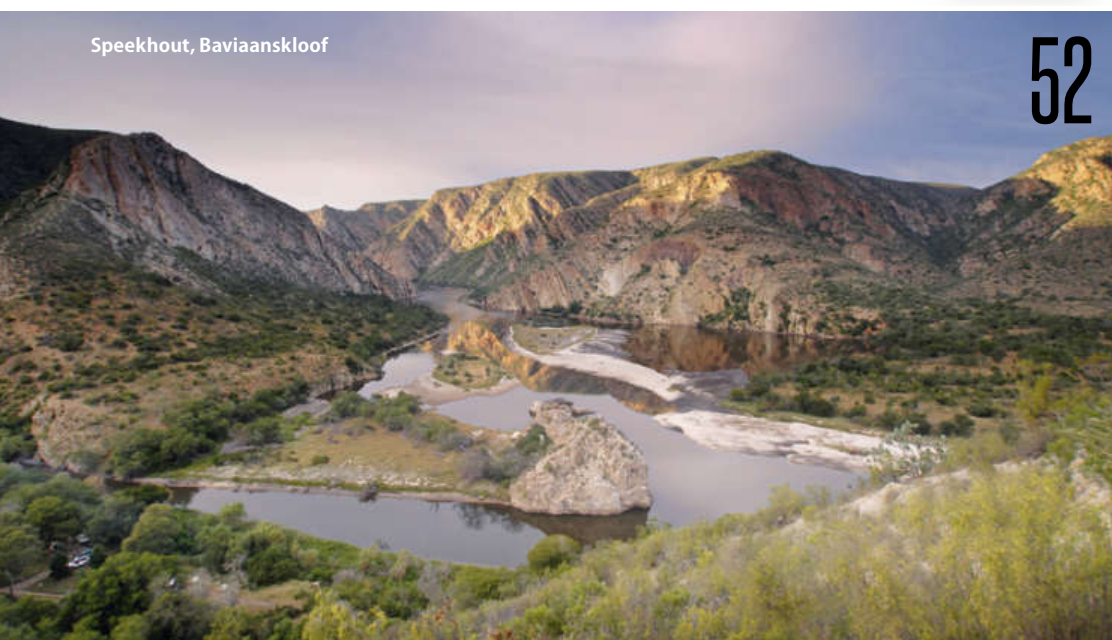
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Speekhout, Baviaanskloof



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Published by RamsayMedia (Pty) Ltd

Company registration number :1934/005460/07 ISSN number:1013-8390

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Printing CTP Gravure, Durban and distributed by RNA, 12 Nobel St, Industria West, Johannesburg.



Average monthly sales
ABC total 36 168, paid 35 823
(Jan to March 2015)

FIRST THINGS FIRST

SONYA SCHOEMAN



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SHEM COMPION

Shem Compion's passion for natural areas and photography has led to a life of travel photo documentation throughout Southern Africa. He is known for his creative representation of common subjects and his images of newborn wildlife (page 74) capture the candid moments of our favourite furry babies.



NARINA EXELBY

Narina Exelby lives in a fishing village in Bali. The nearest shop selling yoghurt and gin is a two-hour drive away: a small sacrifice for the luxury of drinking coffee on a black-sand beach with a view of Java's volcanoes. On a trip to Kuala Lumpur (page 106) recently she had her first hot bath and glass of decent wine in months – but missed her village madly.



KATI AULD

Kati Auld's real job is being Getaway's chocolate biscuit manager – but she moonlights as an online editor when time allows. She's enthusiastic about jumping off high things, exploring Africa and overthinking social issues, so it's only natural she'd find herself writing about Victoria Falls sooner or later. Read her excellent guide on page 139.

Our continent's own horizons have no limits

The rand's sad wilt will force many travellers to relook their choice of destination – and that may not be a bad thing

'Rand is 20,57 to the pound,' read the doleful message from a friend who imports fabrics from England. My heart deflated at the thought of his tactile velvets and exquisite linens going up in price, and then my mind turned to my next concern: travel.

I haven't been to London for about 10 years. Looks like I won't be going again any time soon, I thought. And then I wondered: does that upset me?

I'm a South African with a foreign parent. I have never tried to get a foreign passport, even though it would save me plenty when travelling to the EU. However, I prefer to travel to countries that are off the onerous visa list – and there are plenty. Realistically, I imagine it will take me a lifetime to do those ones justice, leaving only time for a handful that require visas. I can live with that expense.

Why would I, though? I recently had occasion to revisit the Wild Coast. I went in style, flying by helicopter from East London to my destination 20 minutes up the coast – a place called Miarestate, near Haga Haga.

The place itself is a work in progress – not the hotel, which is lovely with great service and excellent food – so much as the estate, which had been farmland and is now being returned to its natural state. But the coastline along which it is set is exquisite – wild with patches of indigenous forest filled with birds and gorgeous plants. We rode horses, walked the beaches and sat and listened to frogs: I love nature's little details. While the big finds are the bold shapes in a painting, the little things make up the nuances of the

colour. I spent only two days there, but it reminded me why, if I could travel only on this continent, I would still be content: it's so damned beautiful.

And since there's always a yang to a yin, the upside is that if more people choose to travel locally or on the continent, it may boost these tourism industries and justify spending on travel infrastructure – and that would certainly be a good thing.

For the most part over the next few months, our magazine will be focusing on places where there is no expensive visa required. Starting the list this month is Kuala Lumpur. Upcoming is Madagascar, Ireland, Brazil (did you know most of South America is visa-free?), Rwanda, Kenya and more.

This issue we also have a story on one of the richest wildlife experiences anyone can have, in the unspoilt Zambezi Region of Namibia (page 80), as well as a feature on the Wild Coast for action nutters (don't be put off if you're not that, though – you can do your own less strenuous thing in the area) on page 92. But if you prefer gentleness, De Hoop Nature Reserve is the destination for you and offers every choice, from camping through to wicked luxury (page 98) – plus it's a magnificent birding mecca.

Again, so many choices right here. And more than ever, we're focused on unearthing these options. I hope you enjoy the read.

TO OUR READERS We want to hear your views. Mail us at editor@getaway.co.za

apollo

GO THE ————— DISTANCE



THE TRAVELLER

DARREL BRISTOW-BOVEY



A philosopher and a gentlemen

On a hot and sticky train in Kenya, our columnist finds a man with dignity despite the dust

I was in Mombasa, moving on to Nairobi, and a flight would have been faster but I decided to take the Lunatic Express.

It's an overnight journey on rickety tracks from the steamy palm trees of the coast up the steep escarpment to the thorn trees and cool altitudes. It was hot outside and even hotter inside the compartment. There was a fine metal mesh over the windows and a ventilator fan above the window that only

the seat beside him. Everyone else's clothes were sodden and limp but the collar of his white shirt was perfectly crisp. He ate his carrot soup and beef stew with perfect composure, then took his hat and nodded to the room with perfect courtesy and took his leave.

That night I lay wrung-out like an old sweat sock on the top bunk, waking at odd hours, enjoying the feel of hurtling through the darkness, rushing

'Everyone else's clothes were sodden and limp but the collar of his white shirt was perfectly crisp'

moved when the train moved, and only because the hot air from outside was pushing the blades.

We crossed the causeway from Mombasa Island to the mainland in the last light of day and sat at dinner looking out at the perfect blackness. There were only a few others in the dining car – a couple of grimy Kiwi backpackers and a young bald man who was a physio-therapist for the Kenyan Department of Health, and an older gentleman who sat alone at a table, his back perfectly straight, wearing a tweed jacket and tie and polished black brogues with a fine felt hat on

headlong into Africa, the continent rising beneath our wheels. We woke in the morning covered in a film of dust and grime that filtered through the fine mesh of the windows. We swayed down the narrow corridors to the dining compartment for breakfast, and there, wearing the same tweed jacket, his back still ramrod straight, his collar crisp and white and perfect, his hat on the seat beside him, was the elderly gentleman from last night.

I wanted to ask him how he managed to stay so laundered, but I didn't have the nerve. Once he'd finished his bacon and eggs and dabbed the

corners of his mouth with the white napkin and had placed his cutlery neatly together on his plate, I struck up a conversation. He pointed through the window to the yellow Athi Plains, and told me that it was on this stretch of track, when the railway was being built in 1898, that the famous two maneless male man-eating lions of Tsavo (nicknamed 'The Ghost' and 'The Darkness') used to carry away dozens of hapless construction workers until they were finally killed by Lieutenant Colonel Patterson of the British Army.

He told me that he liked the train, that train travel was a gentleman's travel, that it proceeded at a pace sufficiently stately to allow one time to arrange one's thoughts. There is no dignity in an aeroplane, he said calmly. I thought about the grime on my neck and I wondered about the dignity of last night's heat, but I didn't say anything.

After his coffee he stood and took his hat and greeted me with a courteous nod. Once the swinging door had closed behind him, the steward poured me another cup. 'I see you have met Mr Owiti.'

Mr Owiti was a salesman, and twice a month he travelled between Mombasa and Nairobi. He carried one battered cardboard suitcase, repaired with insulating tape, and he always wore precisely the same clothes.

'Is his shirt always so clean?' I asked.

'Always,' said the steward.

I don't know if Mr Owiti still travels the rails between Mombasa and Nairobi, and I don't know what he sold, but whatever he had, I'd like to buy some. **G**

MAKING TRACKS

A FEW WHOLLY UNIMPORTANT FACTS

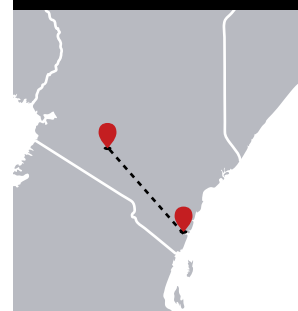
1. The Lunatic Express, as it was coined by American author Charles Miller in his eponymous book, dates back to the colonial era.

Known as the Uganda Railway, it ran from Mombasa to Kampala and was built by the British to protect their interests in Uganda from the Germans.

2. The entire port of Kilindini in Mombasa was created to receive 200 000 rail lengths, 1,2 million sleepers, 200 000 fish plates, 400 000 fish bolts and 4,8 million steel keys, all imported to build the railway.

3. To keep your clothes wrinkle-free when travelling, hang them in the bathroom while you take a shower or above a steaming kettle. The latter also works for tweed jackets, which look great when worn while drinking tea made from the steaming kettle.

MOMBASA TO NAIROBI



INBOX

TRAVELLERS SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS

WINNING LETTER

Premarital travel

There are many tests to pass before getting married. Some say before achieving the perpetual bliss of eternal companionship one has to live together, others propose an online quiz which indicates whether you are 'meant to be'. The one infallible test remains: travel.

My then-boyfriend PJ and I went to Holland to work as cheap nursery labour. This entailed manually pruning trees. After our first day, our hands were raw with blisters. I made our incompetence evident by only packing pink Princess plasters. However, we fixed each other up and carried

on working, suffering in silence (aka complaining in Afrikaans).

The next obstacle: riding a bicycle. I last rode a bicycle as a child and, shockingly, it's very possible to unlearn it. As if the international language of hand-gesturing to motorists

'We were taken out of our comfort zones'

wasn't embarrassing enough, I had to push PJ's limits by tiptoeing across streets with the bicycle between my legs.

On our final pre-matrimonial trip we went to Vietnam. I fell off my bicycle (he nursed my

wounds), and we had a close scrape with rabid dogs.

Through all these excursions, we were taken out of our comfort zones and forced to cope with new challenges as a team. We learnt to disagree – and when to disagree. We learnt to bargain – with others and each other. We learnt to get mad and frustrated and to forgive and laugh. And through these journeys we realized we have found each other.

As for the effects of travel on postnuptial voyages? We will have to travel and see.

– **Tania Nieuwoudt,**
Cape Town

WIN!

Tania wins a Braven BRV-1 outdoor speaker from Above and Beyond, worth R1 899!

This palm-size boom box is waterproof and shock absorbent, providing up to 12 hours of music.

Available from the Gadget Shop. Email your letters to editor@getaway.co.za



SNAP OF THE MONTH Katie Levick from Pretoria snapped this 2000-year-old baobab tree in Limpopo.



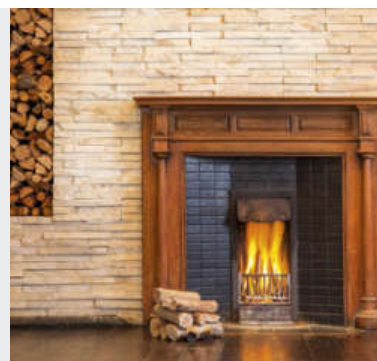
WIN! Send us your snap of the month and win a R400 Outdoor Warehouse gift voucher. outdoorwarehouse.co.za

🐦 Loving the photography tips in the August issue of @GetawayMagazine. And almost every page makes me want to hit the road!
@BLKSOULSMILE

🐦 When waiting in waiting rooms is a pleasure. Enjoyed [Finding Cold Comfort in Istanbul, November 2014] @GetawayMagazine, @dbbovey is always such a treat.
@JUDIECRUZ

WINNERS!

In our July issue we asked you to share your favourite fireside spots to win a double dinner at one of four of our choice cosy winter restaurants. The winners are **Ross Cluver, Shirleen Sullivan, Frank Karigambe** and **Calene Kruger**.



SPEAK TO US!

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Earthquake while trekking in Nepal

Seven of us set out on the Annapurna Circuit Trek on 21 April with Rame, our guide, and four porters who, together with Santaman Tamang the organiser, live in three adjacent villages in the Langtang region of Nepal's Himalayas.

On 25 April, the earth shook for a few minutes. Rame reassured us tremors were frequent. We continued walking and then witnessed a massive avalanche on Annapurna IV.

The villages where our new friends lived had been flattened with great loss of life.

We turned back. On the way Rame managed to persuade a driver to turn around and take us down. There were 16 people, including luggage and the initial load of potatoes, in the vehicle. The driver had to negotiate his way around rocks that had fallen onto the narrow track with a chasm hundreds of metres down to the river below. Where a landslide blocked the road we

*'Where
a landslide
blocked
the road we
continued
on foot'*

continued on foot. There was another aftershock causing a small landslide on the hill opposite.

Rame got another driver to take us further. Eleven hours later, we arrived at Besi Sahar after the most harrowing journey of my life. Rame saw to our arrangements and then they bade us farewell before setting off on a journey which included walking for 10 hours overnight to attend the funerals of their parents and others.

We had been spared the direct effects of the tragedy by the professionalism and commitment of five amazing people. Had it not been for them we might have found ourselves in grave danger.

If you wish to donate to ongoing relief efforts for the villages of our guides, please contact Estelle van Jaarsveld at estelle@giftofthegivers.org.

— Basil Walker, Joburg



THE BFGOODRICH
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THE THREE CATEGORIES

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Photos of your 4x4 with BFGoodrich tyres in an extreme environment.

THE ICONIC SPOT

Photos of your 4x4 in an iconic or picturesque spot in Southern Africa.

READERS' CHOICE

Share your photos and get your friends to vote.

For prizes and details
on how to enter turn to page 15

PLUS

One person who votes for the winning Readers' Choice image will win the use of an Avis Safari Rental vehicle for one week to experience the thrill of an off-road adventure.



ESCAPE

WISH YOU WERE HERE

EYE CANDY FROM AROUND THE WORLD





HALONG BAY, VIETNAM

Famed for its jade waters dotted with majestic tower-like islands, Halong Bay is like nature's Manhattan: the skyscrapers replaced with rock faces topped by lush rainforests. Rising above the tranquil surface of the South China Sea, the limestone islands are the result of more than 20 million years of oceanic movement and exposure to the tropical climate. Their strange and unique shapes have resulted in names such as Stone Dog and Teapot islands. Halong translates as 'where the dragon descends into the sea', and local legend holds that the islands were created by a great mountain-dwelling dragon who came down to defend Vietnam from the ships of foreign invaders. She spat out jewels and droplets of jade, which became the thousands of towering rock formations.

DO IT The cliffs, coves and coral reefs are a natural wonderland for hikers, rock climbers and scuba divers. The bay becomes less crowded in the evenings, so many travellers opt for a leisurely overnight cruise. While gliding amid the islands, you can eat fresh seafood and swim in the cool salty water, followed by some kayaking and caving. Staying overnight also means you can watch sunset and sunrise over the bay. Try to avoid the packed and poorly maintained boats of the low-budget tours; a mid-range two-day, one-night tour costs about R1 600 pp, including meals and transfers. halongbaytours.com.au

LAKE NAKURU, KENYA

Lake Nakuru, one of the shallow soda lakes of Kenya's Great Rift Valley, becomes a sea of pink during the dry season when thousands of flamingos take up residence here to feed on algae. These birds made a lucky escape from a spotted hyena that had been stalking the flock for a quick snack. Lying in the protected Lake Nakuru National Park, this body of water is surrounded by rocky escarpments, pockets of acacia forest and rolling grasslands. However, flamingo numbers are declining, widely believed to be the result of pollution from nearby industries or because of natural changes in water quality. The park is home to a rehabilitated black and white rhino population and the rare Rothschild's giraffe as well as other wildlife including warthog, waterbuck, lion, cheetah, zebra and buffalo. The cliffs to the west of the lake have the same sweeping views and are populated by African fish eagles.

DO IT The lake is a two-hour drive from Nairobi, with scenic views of the valley along the way. The dry months of January and February are the best times to see migrating birdlife. For superior views, head to the Out of Africa Lookout, less frequented by tour groups than the lower Baboon Cliff. Here, one can see the cerise spectacle of flamingos against Lake Nakuru's blue waters. It's possible to do a four-day tour of Kenya, visiting Lake Naivasha, Lake Nakuru and the Masai Mara Game Reserve, for about R7 000 pp. Alternatively, if you are driving independently, entrance to the park is about R1 000 pp and most of the park is accessible by two-wheel-drive vehicles. nomadtours.co.za

**Prices and conversions correct at time of going to print*





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THE BFGOODRICH
'WHERE ON EARTH AM I?' COMPETITION
IS BACK, FEATURING YOUR PHOTOS
FROM THE MOST OFF-THE-GRID
AND ICONIC 4X4 DESTINATIONS.

THE THREE PRIZES

ACTION AND ADVENTURE

PRIZE A set of BFGoodrich 4x4 tyres
and a self-drive holiday in Botswana.

ICONIC SPOT

PRIZE A set of BFGoodrich 4x4 tyres
and a self-drive holiday in Botswana.

READERS' CHOICE

Share your photos through the Facebook
app and get friends to vote. Five images with
the most votes, plus five selected by *Getaway*,
will go through to the second round,
where voters will pick the winner.

PRIZE The image with the most votes will win a
set of BFGoodrich 4x4 tyres and one voter will
win the use of an AVIS Safari Rental 4x4 for a
week-long, self-drive holiday.

TO ENTER Visit facebook.com/GetawayMagazine
before 17 November 2015 and upload your off-road
pictures to the BFGoodrich 'Where on Earth Am I?' app.
Provide a short caption giving your name and where the
photo was taken. A panel of judges will select the winning
photos in the 'Action and Adventure' and 'Iconic Spot'
categories. Voting for the 'Readers' Choice' finalists will
open on 20 November and close on 18 December.
Winners will be published in the March 2016 issue of
Getaway. Terms and conditions apply and are
available at getaway.co.za/competitions

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Tires
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Safari Rental
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NEWS

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

YOU WILL PROBABLY NEVER SEE THIS PLACE IN PERSON IN YOUR LIFE.

BUT LUCKILY FOR US, SOMEONE
ELSE DID, AND MADE A MOVIE OF IT

Making a movie about extreme athletes means extreme conditions for film-makers. Even though these environments might be unthinkable for normal humans, the films at this year's Banff Mountain Film Festival allow us a glimpse of the most beautiful and isolated corners of the world which we might otherwise never get to see.

THE LOWDOWN Screening at selected Ster Kinekor cinemas, the festival presents 11 short films documenting athletes taking on the natural world. Extreme sports include skiing, mountain biking, paragliding and slacklining.

WHERE Cavendish Square and Tyger Valley Shopping Centre, Cape Town; Sandton City, Johannesburg; Gateway Theatre of Shopping, Umhlanga; Brooklyn Mall, Pretoria; Baywest Mall, Port Elizabeth

DON'T MISS Watch Andy Farrington and other pros speedride the Alaskan mountain range in the *The Unrideables*. This high-speed mountain sport combines skiing and parachuting to give riders access to otherwise inaccessible spots.

BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL

23 October – 2 November

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FILMS A BIT MORE
MELLOW, CHECK OUT
THE SHNIT FILM
FESTIVAL 7-18 OCTOBER**

It's an international short film festival with 10-, 20- and 40-minute shorts, organised into two-hour theme-specific screenings. The genres include fiction, documentary, animation and experimental films. Screenings are at The Labia Theatre in Cape Town.

DO IT Screenings from R40 pp and an unlimited weekend pass is R180. shnit.org/en/

GREEN WITH ENVY

The carbon-neutral Hotel Verde at Cape Town International Airport became the first hotel in the world to be awarded double platinum for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. Its innovative sustainability methods include regenerative drive elevators, energy-efficient lighting, power-generating gym equipment, rainwater capture, an eco-pool and low-flow water fittings. There is also an aquaponics system – used to grow food using only a small amount of water, no artificial fertiliser and no soil. From R1 220 per room (sleeps two). hotelverde.co.za



TRAVEL FOR THE PROLETARIAT

New developments in the air to make travel on the continent and beyond smarter, cheaper and easier

FLY TO NAM FOR R299

Flyafrika.com is offering low fares between Joburg and Windhoek on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, with one-way tickets starting at R299 pp excluding tax. flyafrika.com

A NEW OPTION FOR LOW-COST FLIGHTS IN SA

Fly Blue Crane launched on 1 September and offers flights between Joburg, Bloemfontein, Kimberley and Nelspruit. flybluecrane.com

NEW AIRLINE FOR ZIMBABWE

Rainbow Airlines, which was

supposed to launch in August but ran into permitting problems, plans to provide daily return flights from Johannesburg to Harare. To do this, however, the airline still needs to apply for a Foreign Operator's Permit, which is not yet in the pipeline. rainbowairlines.co.zw

MORE INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS FROM DURBAN

Turkish Airlines will be the third international airline to offer flights to King Shaka International Airport. At the moment, Emirates is

the only international carrier that offers flights to and from Durban. Qatar Airways start their flights from December. turkishairlines.com

MALAWIAN AIRLINES INCREASES JOZI FLIGHTS

As a result of popular demand, the airline will up the number of flights between Johannesburg and Lilongwe and Blantyre. The flights to both cities will operate on Wednesdays and Saturdays from OR Tambo International Airport and cost about R5 600 return. malawian-airlines.com



FOUR OTHER GREEN HOTELS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Peech, Joburg, Gauteng

Rechargeable batteries are used in all the appliances and a grey-water recycling system is used to irrigate the garden, with a section that provides fresh, organic vegetables and herbs to the bistro. B&B from R2 600 per room (sleeps two). thepeech.co.za

The Oyster Box, Umhlanga, KwaZulu-Natal

The hotel heats its various swimming pools with the excess heat generated by air conditioning. It also has solar panels and energy-efficient lamps and a recycling system. B&B from R4 113 per room (sleeps two). oysterboxhotel.com

Bulungula, Wild Coast, Eastern Cape

Fully solar-powered and voted second-best eco-lodge in the world in 2014 by *Lonely Planet* and UK's *The Guardian* newspaper, it's also one of the first lodges in the world to be Fairtrade accredited. There's camping, dorm, standard and luxury tented accommodation from R90 pp to R195 pp. bulungula.com

Umlani Bushcamp, Timbavati, Limpopo

Umlani is not only powered by solar energy, but candles and oil lamps light each hut in the camp and the open bush showers are fuelled by wood fires. From R3 209 pp includes three meals daily, game drives, bush walks and local drinks. umlani.com

(plus something new)

Eco-hotel planned for Mozambique

The Southern African Development Agency is planning a 200-room, sustainable eco-hotel with a hospitality staff-training academy in Mozambique.



WHERE THE WHALES ARE

Once a year, humpback whales glide slowly from the icy Antarctic Ocean and along our coastline to reach their feeding and breeding grounds off Mozambique and Angola. Southern right whales make a similar journey, travelling between 500 metres to four kilometres an hour to calve along our southern shores before returning back to the cold Antarctic. According to Dr Peter Best, a whale researcher from the Mammal Research Institute at the University of Pretoria, a one-way trip could take up to 10 to 20 days.

This means that from June to November, we landlubbers have a chance to marvel at these gargantuan creatures. Some of the best views are found on the Western Cape coast and particularly from the whale-watching walkways snaking along the cliffs of Hermanus, with its warm waters and wide, shallow bays – perfect conditions for breeding and rearing.

DO IT For beautiful views and a great whale-watching spot away from the bustle, drive up Rotary Way from Camphill Road in Hermanus. Choose any rock, have a seat and enjoy. If you want to get a bit closer, book a table at Bientang's Cave, where you can dine and watch these sea giants from only metres away. Mains are from R70 pp. bientangscave.com

Alternatively, book a sea kayaking trip with Walker Bay Adventures. It's eco-friendly, takes two hours and starts at R350 pp. www.walkerbayadventures.co.za

The Hermanus Whale Festival, celebrating its 24th year, will be held from 2–4 October. Last year's festival welcomed over 100 000 visitors and this year they can once again enjoy spectacular whale acrobatics, as well as live music, food and arts and crafts. whalefestival.co.za

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* Applicable to Mercedes-Benz vans.

** This discount is only offered on Reman Parts, provided that all core criteria have been met.

Offer ends 31 December 2015.

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SIX FESTIVALS FOR ALL TASTES

For culture vultures

AARDKLOP NATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL, POTCHEFSTROOM 6–10 October

If you're looking for a culture fix, whether it's comedy or classical music, choose from the rich variety of entertainment at Aardklop this year. At this Afrikaans festival you can indulge in some opera, dance like a madman to Francois van Coke or enjoy one of the many humorous and heartfelt theatre productions. **DO IT** From R50 pp. cloveraardklop.co.za

For outdoor enthusiasts

RUFFSTUFF OUTDOOR EXPO, POTCHEFSTROOM 6–10 October

It's no secret that being outdoors is good for you and contact with nature helps balance out the stresses of our city-centric lives. Running concurrently with the Aardklop National Arts Festival, this expo will host exhibitions relating to outdoor activities, including fishing, boating, cycling, 4x4 and various water sports, to name a few. **DO IT** R20 pp and R10 for kids. ruffstuffexpo.com

For oenophiles

ROBERTSON WINE ON THE RIVER, ROBERTSON 16–18 October

Picture yourself lazing on the poplar-shaded banks of a gently flowing river, glass of cold Sauvignon in hand, rolling hills and vineyards stretching out around you. The Breede River provides water for this fertile soil, resulting in over 300 delectable wines available for tasting from the region's award-winning wineries. **DO IT** From R110 pp. wineonriver.com

For foodies

GOOD FOOD AND WINE SHOW, DURBAN 30 October–1 November

In the words of Virginia Woolf: 'One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.' There's no better excuse to indulge in boutique wines, craft beers and dishes from Durban's best restaurants, while watching top celebrity chefs cook up a culinary storm. **DO IT** R90 pp. Various special rates available. goodfoodandwineshow.co.za

For green fingers

FRANSCHHOEK OPEN GARDENS FESTIVAL, FRANSCHHOEK 23–25 October

When John Keats wrote about 'the poetry of the earth', one imagines he envisioned a place somewhat like the lush, secret corner of Franschhoek. This year, 10 of the valley's private gardens will be opened for the public to frolic and stroll in the splendour of nature. Also expect tea, bubbly and live music. **DO IT** R150 for a weekend pass. franschhoek.org.za

For a good cause

CAPE TOWN INTERNATIONAL KITE FESTIVAL, MUIZENBERG

31 October–1 November

Every year, in support of Cape Mental Health, the skies of Muizenberg fill up with colourful shapes buoyed up on the sea winds. Over 20 000 people come to see this spectacle, which includes professionally crafted masterpieces, giant cartoon character kites and Japanese-inspired Rokakku kite battles. Great fun for kids and adults alike.

DO IT Tickets are R30 pp.

capementalhealth.co.za/kite

See page 44 for the best self-catering spots in Franschhoek

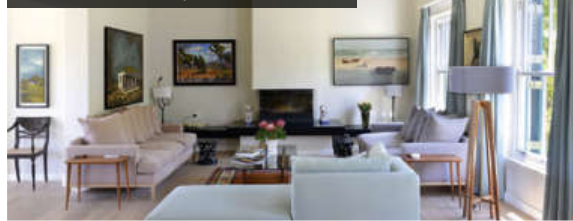


WIN A LUXURY WINELANDS WEEKEND FOR TWO

FLIGHTS INCLUDED!

The Cape Winelands is one of South Africa's most beautiful – and popular – areas.

And for good reason: besides the gorgeous views, it's home to some of the world's best wine farms. Now one lucky reader, plus a partner, stands the chance of spending a weekend here in luxury – a bespoke wine tour, flights and exclusive accommodation included.



WORTH
R50 000!

PRIZE INCLUDES:

- A full-day private guided tour of the Cape Winelands curated for your ideal winelands experience by Explore Sideways.
- Accommodation for two nights in one of two luxury Time&Away villas, either set in Franschhoek in the heart of the winelands or overlooking the ocean on Clifton's Millionaire's Row. Accommodation includes a continental breakfast, snacks and wine.
- Flights from Durban or Johannesburg with kulula.com, the one-stop place for flights, hotels and car rentals.

TO ENTER

Visit getaway.co.za/competitions and vote for your favourite Explore Sideways Tour to enter the draw.



explore the winelands

See a full list of curated winelands experiences at exploresideways.co.za



Find more luxury holiday rentals at timeandaway.co.za



Follow South Africa's top-rated low cost carrier: facebook.com/ifykulula, twitter.com/kulula

* TERMS AND CONDITIONS
This competition ends on 31 October 2015.
The winner will be announced on 4 November 2015. Further terms and conditions apply. See rules at getaway.co.za

TAKING ACTION

WITH MORE THAN 750 RHINOS POACHED IN SOUTH AFRICA SO FAR THIS YEAR* (HIGHER THAN THE SAME PERIOD IN 2014), AUTHORITIES ARE TAKING DRASTIC STEPS TO ENSURE THEIR SURVIVAL

Kruger National Park

In an ongoing bid to safeguard the rhinos in SA's most-hit park, SANParks has relocated a total of about 40 rhinos from Kruger's hotspots. 'While recognising that there is no single remedy to this problem, we believe that the programme for the relocation of rhino will make a major contribution towards securing populations in South Africa and in Southern Africa,' says Reynold Thakhuli, head of communications at SANParks.

iSimangaliso Wetland Park

The iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority recently made the difficult decision to de-horn both black and white rhinos in the Western Shores section of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park. 'Removal of the rhino horn renders them valueless,' says CEO of iSimangaliso Wetland Park, Andrew Zaloumis. 'It's painless and there are no side effects.'

*Official statistics by the Department of Environmental Affairs on 31 August 2015

ON ASSIGNMENT

Getaway journalist Melanie van Zyl found two rhino that had been poached less than 100 metres away from the main tar road heading north in Kruger National Park. 'It was just quite hectic that two enormous rhino were poached so close to tar in the park.'



LOOK OUT FOR

A series of locally designed life-size, sculptures of rhinos on a trek through Cape Town in January 2016 to raise funds for rhino protection. therhinosarecoming.org



NEW SIGHTS IN JOZI

Here are three fun things to check out on the CitySightseeing routes

The Carlton Centre view

At 223 metres high and 50 storeys, this shopping mall is the tallest building in Africa, and once home to the Carlton Hotel. For R15 (under 12s R10) take the lift to the top for a 360-degree view of Jozi. gauteng.net

TIP From here, take the new shuttle (R40) to Maboneng for a one- or two-hour tour with Curiosity Backpackers. The tour takes visitors through the history of the precinct

and there's plenty of lunch and shopping spots. curiocitybackpackers.com

Market goods

Behind the brick walls of The Sheds@1Fox in a historic district of industrial warehouses constructed in 1893, there's a marketplace of eateries and bars, produce stands, artisan food, gifts, art, bars and a pulsating mix of both Joburgers and tourists. 1fox.co.za

Top eatery

There's a new spot for foodies at Constitution Hill. Hill Café is a great place to relax and enjoy a delicious burger with hand-cut chips, a bunny chow or an assortment of tasty dishes. Meals average around R45. Entry is R55 pp. constitutionhill.org.za

Tickets from R150. Buy online and save R20. citysightseeing.co.za/joburg



NEW IN CAPE TOWN

City Sightseeing now offers free daily 60-minute walking tours of Bo-Kaap and historic Cape Town.
citysightseeing.co.za

FOLLOW THAT FUEL!

Two apps to help you get the most out of your tank



FillApp is a locally developed app. Enter your

vehicle's tank size, fuel type and where you live to see the current fuel price and the cost to fill a tank. That's pretty straightforward, but where it gets useful is in predicting price changes. Swipe the screen to see when the next change is due, what the price is predicted to be, and what that means for your next fill up. If you forget to check, there's an automatic alert so you'll never miss

a fuel hike again. Free on Android and iOS.



SA Fuel isn't as slick as FillApp and although there's a price change alert, it doesn't provide estimates or price predictions. That said, it beats FillApp with historical data, providing a complete fuel price history going back seven years. Coastal 95 unleaded was R7.23 in January 2008. Free on Android and not to be confused with SA Fuel Price, an iOS alternative to FillApp.



For a quick and easy fuel-budgeting service, try the Monthly Fuel Cost Calculator at www.drivesouthafrica.co.za. Input your monthly

kilometres, litres or average spend to see how the next price change will affect your pocket.

WIN



BOOTS FIT FOR ADVENTURE

Avid hikers need shoes ready for everything. The Wolverine Black Ledge hiking shoe has a waterproof leather upper forming a solid and durable frame with mesh foot lining to manage moisture and traction designed to deal with both humid wet conditions and dry rocky conditions. These shoes feature great traction for use on mud, wet tree roots and rocks and are compression-moulded for plush comfort. Mid-height boots and ladies fit are also available.

R1 200, wolverinesa.co.za

Turn to page 112 to win a pair and see more hot gear for summer



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-2016-**



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HEALTH

TRAVEL OPINIONS, QUESTIONS AND ADVICE

Trafalgar Beach in KwaZulu-Natal has lifeguards on duty year-round and is a relaxed spot perfect for families.

Vitamin Sea

HEARD THAT MAXIM ABOUT THE SEA BEING GOOD FOR YOU? IT IS – AS LONG AS IT'S CLEAN. SO HEAD FOR THESE BLUE FLAG BEACHES

WHY THE SEA IS GOOD FOR YOU

1 The components of seawater – including vitamins, minerals, amino acids, antibacterial and antibiotic substances – are absorbed and used by your body while swimming. These help to promote a healthy immune system, says dietician Dr Ingrid van Heerden (but that doesn't mean you should drink it – if it crossed your mind).

2 Sea air and spray contain negative hydrogen ions, which improve our ability to absorb oxygen by neutralising free radicals, according to an article in *The Telegraph*. The negative ions also balance levels of serotonin – a chemical linked to mood and stress – which is why you feel more relaxed and energised after being by the seaside.

3 Even your skin benefits from ocean swimming. The salt (and sand) acts as an exfoliator by removing dead cells and encourages the production of new ones. Magnesium in the water may help to hydrate the skin, according to the *International Journal of Dermatology*, after a study on the effects of the Dead Sea salt. >

WHAT DOES BLUE FLAG MEAN EXACTLY?

Blue Flags are awarded seasonally and can be withdrawn (and re-awarded) if the criteria are not met.

WHAT DOES BLUE-FLAG STATUS MEAN FOR YOU?

It assures you that the beaches are clean, safe and environmentally friendly. The criteria, set by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), is managed by WESSA (the Wildlife and Environmental Society of South Africa). The 2015 Blue Flag season starts on 1 November. In 2014, 46 South African beaches were certified. These are our picks of the best.

THE POPULAR ONE

1 RAMSGATE BEACH, SOUTH COAST, KWAZULU-NATAL

With its gentle waves, Ramsgate is great for swimming. You may find the crowds overwhelming in summer, but it makes for a lively day out. There are bars and restaurants along the beachfront, a backdrop of forested hills and the shoreline is filled with family entertainment, such as pedal-boating in the estuary. Go here if you don't mind sharing the beach with other sun seekers.

2 TRAFALGAR BEACH, SOUTH COAST, KWAZULU-NATAL

With lifeguards on duty every day of the year, Trafalgar is great for frolicking and safe swimming. The lack of shops and restaurants means this spot gets less crowded than Ramsgate. Go here if you're

looking for a relaxing, quiet visit. If you're offended by naked flesh, don't wander too far or you'll end up on the neighbouring nudist beach.

GREAT FOR FAMILIES

3 HUMEWOOD BEACH, PORT ELIZABETH, EASTERN CAPE

This spot, adjacent to the busy Happy Valley park, is very popular, especially in the holiday season when there's entertainment and activities on offer. During Humewood's Blue Flag season (November to April), there are wheelchairs that can be used on the beach (and in the water) and lifeguards who can assist. Enjoy safe swimming in the open sea or explore one of the rock pools. Go here if you're with kids and need to be near attractions to entertain them.

4 KARIEGA BEACH, KENTON-ON-SEA, EASTERN CAPE

Sandwiched between the Bushmans River Mouth and the Kariega River, this beach is great for those in search of a relaxed seaside sojourn. If you want a break from the saltwater and sand, there's a reserve just behind the beach where you can go for a walk. Go to this beach if you prefer a wild environment to a built-up coastal hub.

5 MUIZENBERG BEACH, FALSE BAY, WESTERN CAPE

You'll probably hear Clifton's the place to be seen – and if that's what you're after, it's definitely the beach to head to. But the water is icy and you'll probably soak up more sand than sea minerals. Muizenberg is a long beach lapped by the warm Indian Ocean water. It has calm sets of waves, walks,

a park and places to eat. Go here if you don't mind dodging newbie surfers. It gets packed in summer and parking can be a nightmare.

BEST-KEPT SECRET

6 WITSAND BEACH, BREEDE RIVER MOUTH, WESTERN CAPE

Here you'll find a four-kilometre sandy stretch, the Breede River estuary and a Cape Fynbos Floral World Heritage Site all rolled into one. It's safe for swimming and there are rock pools to explore. It can get a bit windy so be alert when in the water as it can get rough. Go here if you like to have big chunks of beach to yourself.

See the full list of Blue Flag beaches at blueflag.org.za



Check out the best beach shelters on page 67

Muizenberg Beach, near Cape Town, has warmer waters than the beaches on the city's Atlantic seaboard.

Buffalo City

East London • Bhisho • Mdantsane • King William's Town
EASTERN CAPE • SOUTH AFRICA

www.bctourism.co.za

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SPORT

CULTURE

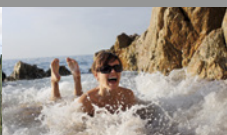
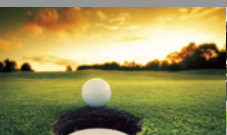
FAMILY

BUSINESS

ROMANCE

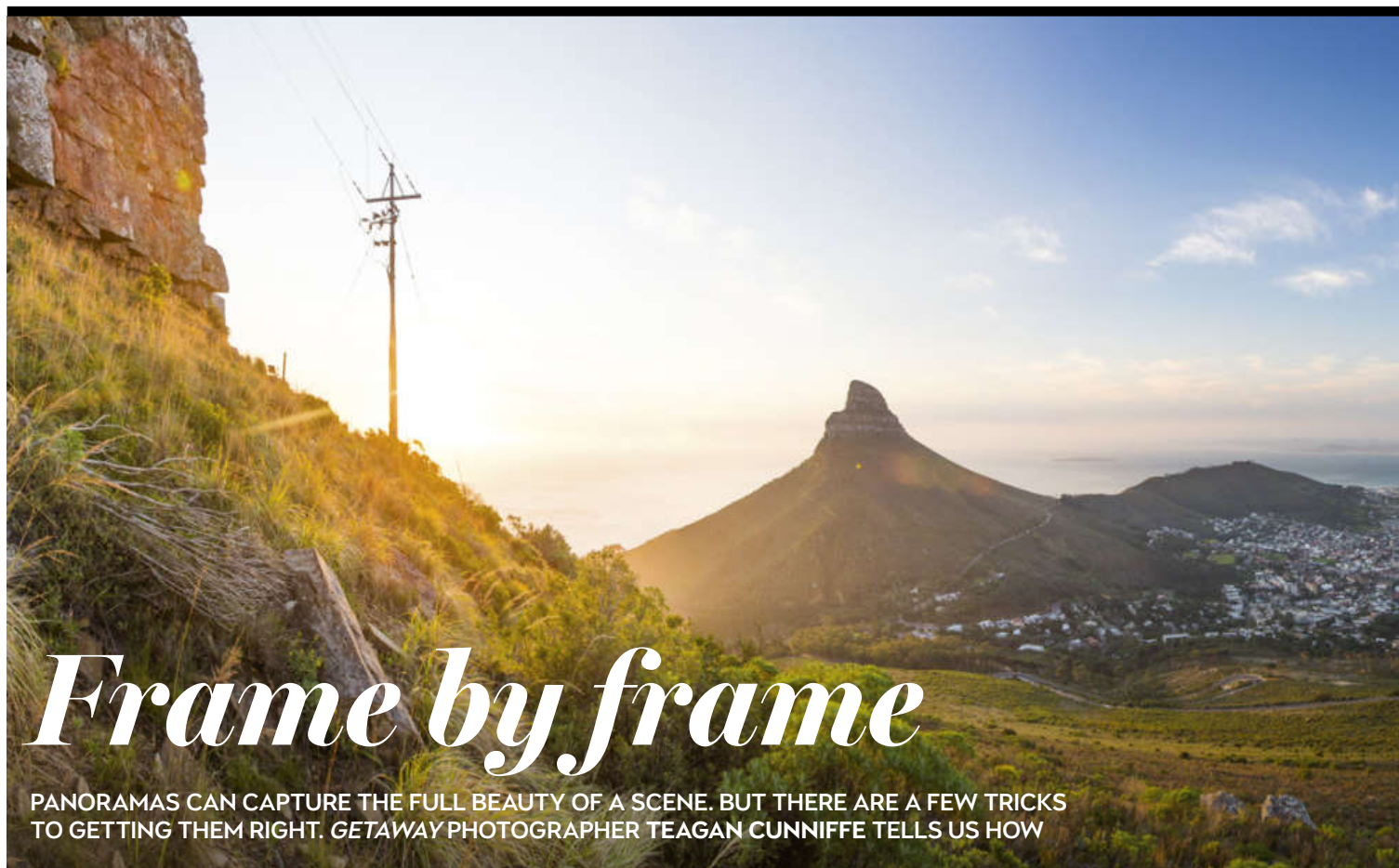
NATURE

ADVENTURE



MASTERCLASS

CREATE THE PERFECT PICTURE



Frame by frame

PANORAMAS CAN CAPTURE THE FULL BEAUTY OF A SCENE. BUT THERE ARE A FEW TRICKS TO GETTING THEM RIGHT. GETAWAY PHOTOGRAPHER TEAGAN CUNNIFFE TELLS US HOW

1 THE BASICS

A panorama is a series of frames stitched together horizontally, vertically or even spherically. Many compact cameras and smartphones have built-in panorama software, while most DSLR users will need to use post-production software such as Photoshop. Attach your camera to a tripod on a level surface and use a focal length longer than 24mm (a wide angle will cause distortion). Remove any coloured filters from your lens and use a shutter release cable to limit camera shake.





2 FIND YOUR SCENE

Look out for a single subject in the foreground such as a tree or an animal. This will give your panorama greater depth and a sense of story. Shooting from ground level will make your scene look flat and two-dimensional. Rather, try to find a high vantage point so you can capture foreground detail and make your pano more interesting. Scenes with movement, such as leaves on trees blowing in the wind or moving water, don't stitch together very well and are best avoided.

3 GET THE RIGHT SETTINGS

If your compact camera or smartphone has a panorama mode, switch it on and follow the prompts. If it doesn't or you are using a DSLR, set it to Manual. It's important to keep your exposure constant. Use a narrow aperture (between f/8 and f/16) to capture foreground and background detail. Next, set your exposure to a few stops darker than usual so details in the highlights of your image, such as bright white clouds, are not lost. Shoot in RAW mode to recover the shadow details later. >

4 TAKING THE PANORAMA

Set your focus to Manual and focus on a subject midway into your scene. Take your first image, then overlap into the next image by one third (remember where your first frame ended and use that as the starting point for your next image) to ensure accurate stitching later on. Keep the horizon line level (parallel to the top of your viewfinder) as you pan from one side to the other to limit jagged contours in the final panoramic image.



Rotating your camera around the lens and not the body will reduce parallax errors. Find out more at getaway.co.za/photography/photo-tips



Tyson Jopson, Chris Davies

5 STITCHING

If you're using a DSLR or a compact camera without a built-in panorama function, you will need

to use Photoshop, Photoshop Elements, or free online software to stitch your images together. In Photoshop, select File/Automate/

Photomerge and then select the images you wish to stitch. Once your pano is stitched (it may take a few minutes), flatten the

layers (cmd/ctrl + E) and use the transform tool (cmd/ctrl + T) with the Warp option to get rid of bowed horizon lines.

NEXT MONTH WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY

Email your burning photography questions to teagan.cunniffe@getaway.co.za



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COMPETITION

GETAWAY GALLERY

ENTER OUR 'AFRICA BY AFRICANS' PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION



FINALIST WHISKERS

Initially, I wasn't too excited about the original image I took of this male leopard standing on a branch. It was only when I cropped and converted it to black and white that his whiskers drew my attention and I saw the potential.

— **By Kevin Holroyd, Sabi Sands Game Reserve**

Canon 6D, Sigma 300mm f/2.8, 1.6 x teleconverter, ISO 800, f/4, 1/3200sec



FINALIST GOLDEN CHEETAH

While driving back to camp at Mashatu Game Reserve in Botswana, we came across a lone cheetah against good backlight. I decided to incorporate the tree to add some texture.

– **By Jaco Marx, Bethlehem**

Canon 1Dx, Canon 500mm f/4, ISO 1250, f/4, 1/400 sec



FINALIST ATLANTIC SLUMBERING

Sandy Cove is a little spot below Twelve Apostles in Cape Town. From here – and on a good day with Eskom – you can see Lion's Head in the distance.
– **By Dominique Troch, Cape Town**

Nikon Df, Nikkor 14-24mm f/2.8G, ISO 100, f/8, 496 sec





FINALIST THE MARCH TO WATER

When I saw the roughly translated 'mountain of ants' in Tarangire National Park in Tanzania, I knew it would be a great background for a herd of, well, anything really. I waited next to the mountain for an opportunity and finally saw a line of elephants marching to the water (which was to the right of this picture). I knew the type of image I wanted to create, and knew I wanted to convert it to black and white with the menacing sky.

– By **Kerry de Bruyn, North Riding**

Nikon D600, Nikkor 28-300mm f/3.5-5.6, ISO 320, f/11, 1/1600 sec

ENTER OUR 'AFRICA BY AFRICANS' COMPETITION NOW!

For six months, this Getaway Gallery competition takes a local twist. From August to December, we are showcasing images that bring out only the best of Africa. So send us any photographs you feel represent our incredible and interesting continent. The focus can include portraits of people, wildlife, landscapes, flora and more – share what living on one of the most beautiful places on Earth looks like to you. The winner will be announced in the January 2016 issue of *Getaway* and the annual Getaway Gallery competition will begin that same month, so keep your entries coming in.

WIN A WEEK ON REUNION ISLAND FOR TWO WORTH R54 000

From lunar landscapes and an active volcano to clear waters and lush forests, this tropical French island in the Indian Ocean is a great holiday destination. Set off the east coast of Africa, Reunion is home to a diversity of cultures, an outstanding undersea world, hiking trails of varying terrain for keen walkers, and it's only a four-hour flight from Joburg.

#gotoReunion blog.welcometoreunionisland.com



THE PRIZE INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

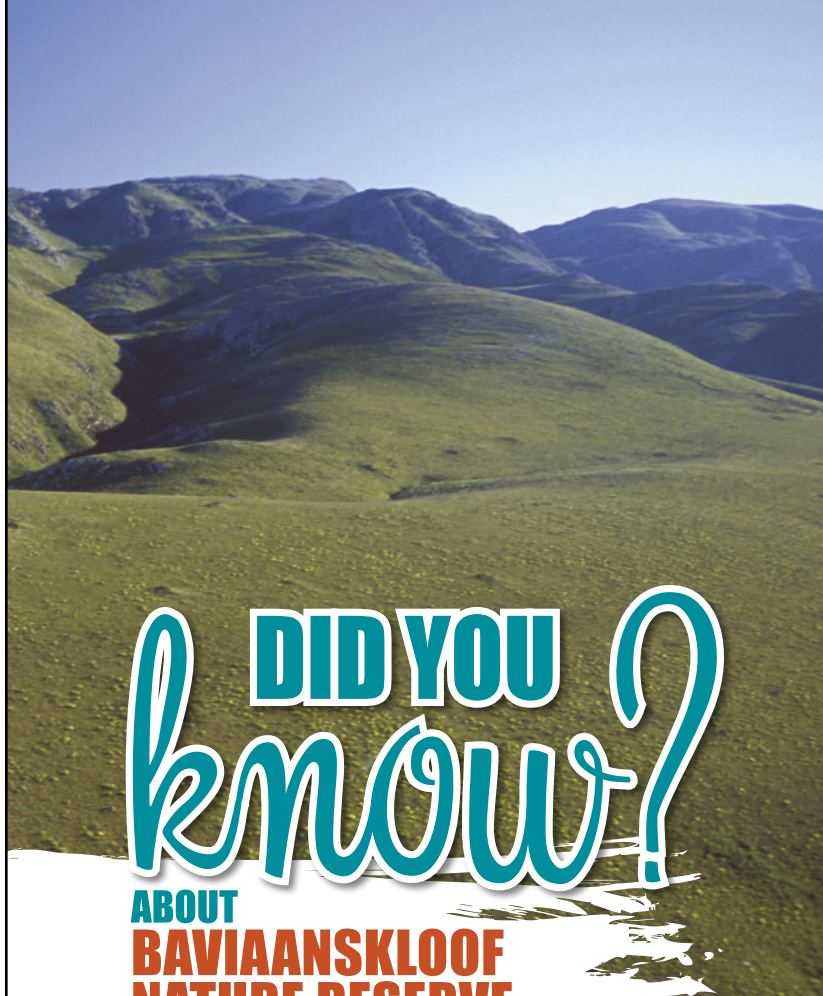
- return flights for two from OR Tambo to Reunion*,
- full-board accommodation for two sharing for six nights in three- and four-star establishments,
- car hire for the duration of the trip,
- a range of activities, including an ultralight ride, exploring the lava tubes, a trip to the tropical gardens and a sunset boat cruise.



HOW DO I SEND IN MY ENTRIES?

Email your images (about 1MB, maximum five per month) to gallery@getaway.co.za. Include a title, information on how and where you took each photograph and details of the camera and lens model used. See getaway.co.za/photo/send-us-your-photos for full guidelines.

More details on the conditions of the prize: the competition is for citizens of African countries only. Tickets are non-transferable, to be used solely by the winner whose name appears on the ticket. *The prize excludes regional and national flights to and from OR Tambo International Airport. To secure your preferred travel dates, it is recommended to book your tickets at least one month prior to departure. **Embargo periods include:** 12 Oct – 25 Oct 2015, 19 Dec 2015 – 29 Jan 2016, 14 Mar – 26 Mar 2016, 07 May – 18 May 2016, 08 Jul – 17 Aug 2016, 08 Oct – 24 Oct 2016, 17 Dec 2016 – 30 Jan 2017. Embargo periods are also over long weekends and school holidays that attract a lot of family vacations: 18 Mar – 5 Apr 2016, 27 Apr – 3 May 2016, 25 Jun – 17 Jul 2016. The onus is on the winner to organise a visa for travelling to Reunion Island. **Please note:** the prize excludes some meals and all alcoholic beverages, and the competition winner will be expected to submit one blog of their exciting trip.



DID YOU know?

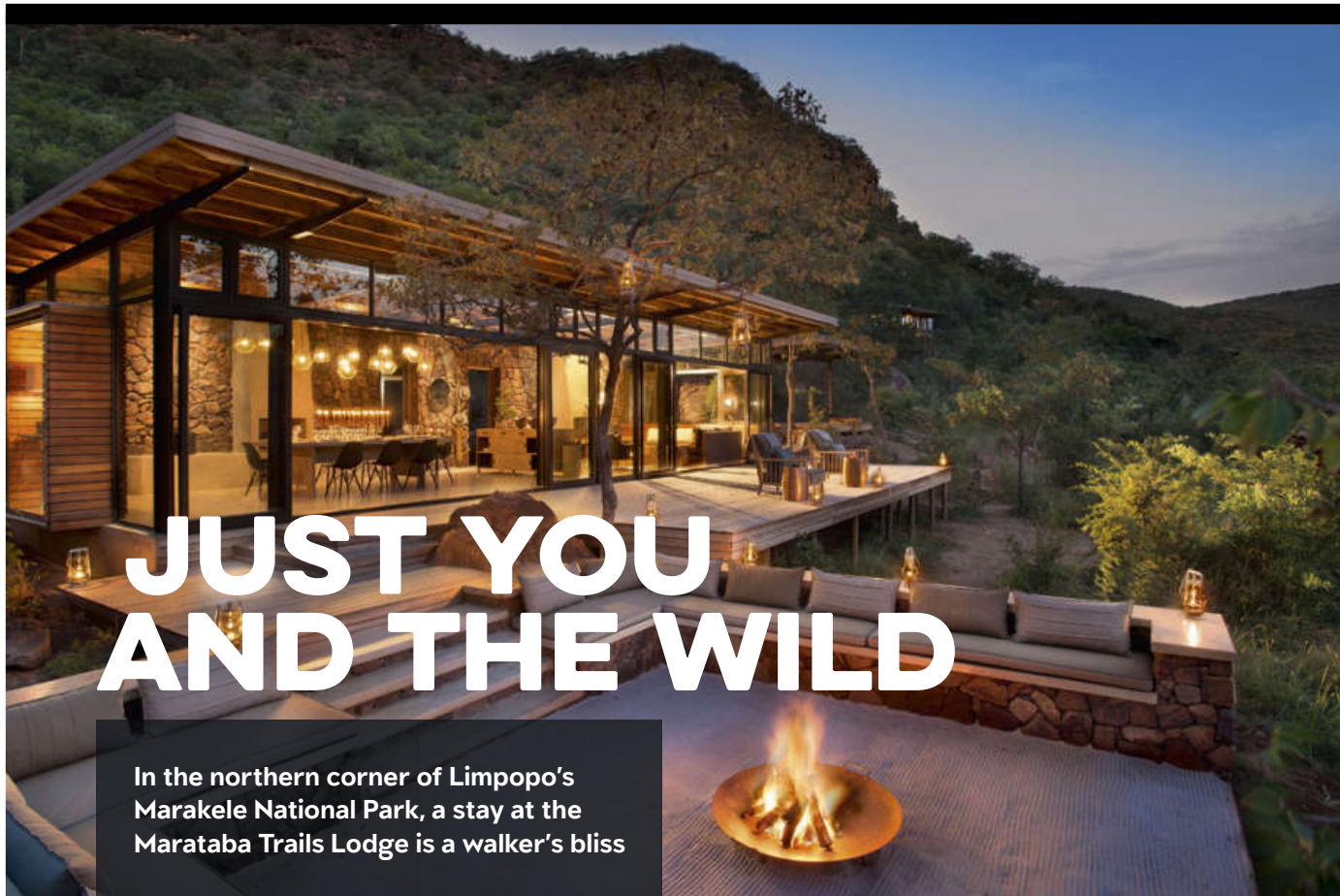
ABOUT
**BAVIAANSKLOOF
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BAVIAANSKLOOF NATURE RESERVE has World Heritage Site status and is the biggest wilderness area in South Africa. Discover breathtaking landscapes, exhilarating hiking trails, rock climbing and 4x4 trails, abundant wildlife and ancient rock art only 127km from Port Elizabeth. The reserve's almost untouched mountains make it an ideal destination for adventure seekers, camping enthusiasts and nature lovers alike.

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Eastern Cape
PARKS & TOURISM AGENCY



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In the northern corner of Limpopo's Marakele National Park, a stay at the Marataba Trails Lodge is a walker's bliss

Located inside the Marataba Reserve, a 23000-hectare private concession with a variety of landscapes not found anywhere else in the country, keen walkers and wildlife enthusiasts have

a piece of nature (almost) all to themselves. The reserve is home to the only Big Five deluxe walking trails experience in South Africa, and there are never more than eight guests at a time.

There are a variety of trails and guided hikes, from four to eight hours, based on two- or three-night stays. All trails head out from the lodge's five ultra-luxurious, fully solar-powered eco suites, which means the

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- All meals, park fees and guided walks.
- Transport to and from Marataba.

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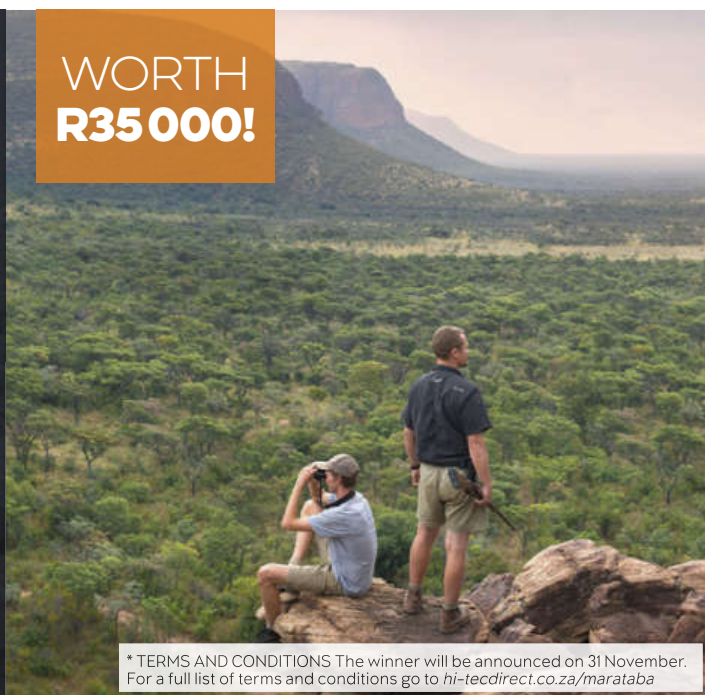
Buy any Hi-Tec gear between 23 September and 16 November at a DueSouth store (and sign up for the Rewards programme), or buy online at duesouth.co.za to be automatically entered.

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R35 000!



* TERMS AND CONDITIONS The winner will be announced on 31 November. For a full list of terms and conditions go to hi-tecdirect.co.za/marataba

HOTEL OF THE MONTH

YOUR VIP GUIDE TO THE SWEET SPOTS

Ndabo Langa outside The Concierge Boutique Bungalows reception area.

The Concierge Boutique Bungalows

FOR NDABO LANGA, ONE OF THE ARCHITECTS OF USHAKA MARINE WORLD AND A DURBAN JAZZ CLUB OWNER, INTIMACY AND GENUINE HOSPITALITY ALWAYS TRUMP OPULENCE

You have a friend coming from the United States, what hotel would you recommend?

The Concierge Boutique Bungalows. I suppose I like small, intimate hotels more than large chains – more personalised environments, not those made from the machine, if you get what I'm saying. I'd rather stay in an environment that is well designed and that has the customer in mind, as opposed to one seemingly just gunning for the bottom line.

What is it about this hotel?

I like the style. It's contemporary but at the same time it's got bits of the 60s influence. I like the slasto stone on the floor and the way they've combined the use of natural materials is quite cool. I think that kind of design will still be relevant 20 years from now, with a bit of a facelift here and there. And the setting, the layout and the design ... it's not a hectically busy place.

What's Durban's appeal?

Besides the obvious, such as the weather and the beach, it's the people. As much as we've recently got bad publicity with xenophobia, the people here are actually really, really friendly. It's also got quite a different aura to [South Africa's] other two major cities. It feels like it's a holiday city – laid-back. It's good for families. The other cool thing is the renovation of the promenade at the beachfront. It has single-handedly changed the perception of Durban. There's an air of optimism. Now we go and spend most of our weekends at the promenade and there are a lot of people from 3 o'clock in the morning all the way to sunset.

You're the owner of a beautiful jazz bar, The Chairman. Tell us about it...

It's an initiative that I took to do >

my bit to reactivate and reignite the Durban Point area. After we finished uShaka Marine World, 12 years ago, I never really went back. The project never really got to do what it was meant to, which was to act as a catalyst for development in that part of town. We need to set the example. We are the ones that need to create the environments we want, as opposed to just being observers and waiting until somebody does something. So I decided to position my architectural practice DGIT six buildings away from The Chairman. The concept works with contradictions: it's in one of the worst areas in Durban, so it becomes sort of an adventure, especially if it's your first time. It works with your nerves a bit. That all changes once you're inside. The gallery in the bar started as a teaser exhibition. We discovered, as far as I know, that there's not a single other gallery open at 2 o'clock in the morning in the same establishment as a bar. Art pieces, whether for sale or not, are talking pieces and you can strike up a conversation with a complete stranger over a piece of art that's in front of you.

Best places for jazz in the country?

Cape Town, though I haven't been there for quite a while. The annual Cape Town International Jazz Festival is great. There aren't a lot of authentic, speakeasy-type jazz venues in SA. Because of the stressful nature of my architecture profession, I tend to enjoy light-hearted and jovial environments as a way to recharge. I really enjoyed my experience at The Orbit Jazz Club in Johannesburg. I also enjoy the music offering from our neighbours, The Dutch whose sound quality is next to none. The way you treat a place is crucial, the service that you offer is also quite important and the hospitality, I rate it number one. That all adds up.

...live music abroad?

Last year, reluctantly, I made a trip to Vietnam. It just blew my mind. There's a rooftop bar

called Broma in Ho Chi Minh City. It's not an exclusively jazz place but it features live performances including blues and jazz. They made the best cocktails I've ever had. It was really awesome.

Earliest childhood travel memory?

We used to make trips to the beach for picnics, and those were quite cool. Another memory is of my late parents dancing to *You Got Your Hooks in Me* by The

O'Jays in Umnini Beach on the South Coast of Durban.

Does South African accommodation stand apart?

I think tourists here are spoilt, possibly because the rooms are slightly bigger, cleaner and well priced. In terms of hospitality, I think there are certain countries that are beating us hands down, and some that are on a par. I got the best service in Vietnam. There was a genuineness in wanting to make your stay

comfortable. It seems that there, jobs are a privilege. At home, there's that sense of entitlement and that's not necessarily going to give you the best service. What I enjoy is the genuineness of people. What sticks in your mind is a person that's given you a hospitable experience.

One thing you never leave behind when travelling?

My iPod. Also, my sketchpad. I prefer quietness, though, when I'm sketching. **G**

NDABO RECOMMENDS THIS IN THE AREA

FOR SIGHTSEEING...

If you ask me, it's the beach. Start from the one end, Blue Lagoon, all the way down. I'm a fanatic of mid-century modern stuff. **South Beach and Victoria Embankment** have got a nice collection of Art Deco buildings. They're quite cool to look at, from a historical point of view. www.durban.gov.za

BITE YOUR TONGUE



↑ TO HARVEY'S RESTAURANT AND THE OYSTER BOX

STAY HERE

THE CONCIERGE BOUTIQUE BUNGALOWS, dubbed 'the hidden gem' by TripAdvisor, is well located in the bustling suburb of Morningside. Stay in one of the quirky, contemporary rooms from R600 pp sharing, including breakfast – and Wi-Fi is free. 031-309-4434, the-concierge.co.za



CAFE 1999

THE CONCIERGE BOUTIQUE BUNGALOWS

DARUMA

COOL RUNNINGS

DURBAN CITY HALL

SOUTH BEACH

MOOKI NOODLE BAR

VICTORIA EMBANKMENT



FOR EATING... There are a few spaces that are quite nice, such as **Harvey's**, a fine dining innovative restaurant in Umhlanga. 031-561-4977, harveysrestaurant.co.za. **Cafe 1999** in Berea serves Mediterranean cuisine and is designed around sharing. 031-202-3406, cafe1999.co.za. **Mooki Noodle Bar** in Glenwood is funky and they have big portions. 031-811-9199, mookinoodles.wordpress.com. I enjoy **Bite Your Tongue**, a sushi place in Durban North. They've got the most amazing steamed fish. 031-563-4419. And **Daruma** at the Southern Sun, Elangeni. 031-362-1322, daruma.co.za

FOR A VIBE...

Aside from the jazz clubs, **Cool Runnings** has great live music. 084-701-6912, coolrunningsdurban.wordpress.com. **The Lighthouse Bar** at The Oyster Box is also a cool hang-out. 031-514-50, oysterboxhotel.com. Any KZN Philharmonic Orchestra Concert, usually on Thursdays at the Durban City Hall. 031-369-9438, kznphil.org.za

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CHECK IN

ON THE CHART

PUTTING TRIPADVISOR TO THE TEST, WE RATE THE BEST BEDS

You'll have your own private cascading waters and rock pool at Waterfall Lodge

Self-catering in Franschhoek

IT IS POSSIBLE TO FIND GOOD-VALUE GETAWAYS IN FRANSCHHOEK. HERE ARE THE BEST SELF-CATERING ESCAPES INSPECTED BY PROFESSIONAL REVIEWER PIPPA DE BRUYN

OUR EXPERT SAYS:

'I would happily stay in almost any of the establishments I inspected'

HOW IT WORKS: TripAdvisor lists accommodation rated by guests, but as much as we love peer reviews, can we trust them? Pippa, who has reviewed accommodation for 17 years, inspected 42 properties – some rated on TripAdvisor, plus she rooted out new ones. These 12 made her list.

42 INSPECTED,
12 SELECTED,
8 < R450 pp





Most romantic bolthole

WATERFALL LODGE

Part of Chamonix Cottages, ranked No. 25 of 39, Speciality Lodging

It's quite a trek to find this little gem (opposite).

Following the signs to Chamonix you wind through enormous vineyards, ascending past fields of grazing zebra and antelope, past the Marco Polo Lodge (stuffed with animal trophies), rising ever higher and deeper into the cleft of the mountain until you reach the final hump to see – at the base of an enormous waterfall – a tiny stone-and-thatch house. With two single beds in the loft and a king-size bed in the bedroom, the house can ostensibly sleep a family of four but it's going to be a very snug and cosy fit. Even two large and/or tall adults might find it Lilliputian. There is a small lounge and narrow kitchenette, between them the highly effective Queen Anne stove. Views are somewhat obscured by trees, and it's at least 10 minutes to town. But the real draw is opening your back door and stepping up to your private fern-fringed, crystal-clear rock pool, into which fresh mountain water thunders from a dizzy height, generating negative ions to purify the air. Magical.

COST R1 500 (sleeps 4), minimum two-night stay.

CONTACT chamonix.co.za/waterfalllodge

Best stand-alone cottage with private pool

CLEMENTINE COTTAGE

Unrated

Located off Green Valley Road amid the vineyards and orchards of L'Avenir Farm, in a most picturesque part of the valley and a three-minute drive to the centre, Clementine Cottage has a great location. It's an easy-living house: most of the self-catering cottages in the valley are repurposed labourers' cottages, (i.e. lacking somewhat in proportion, space and privacy) but Clementine was purpose-built. As such the two en-suite bedrooms – located on either side of the lounge-kitchen area (dining is at the kitchen counter) – are identical in size. There are French doors from the lounge and kitchen that open onto a deep shaded veranda overlooking the decent-size pool and vineyards. The lounge furniture is centred around a large open fireplace and there's an outdoor braai area with plenty of wood provided for both.

COST R1 400 for two or R2 400 for four.

Serviced Monday to Saturday

CONTACT clementinecottage.co.za



THE CASE FOR FRANSCHHOEK

The Ruperts. Richard Branson. Analjit Singh. People who are rich enough to live anywhere on the planet choose to own a piece of Franschhoek. And who can blame them?

• **THERE ARE AFFORDABLE NOOKS** Get off the commercial high street and traverse the back roads that run through orchards and vineyards. Drive deeper into the valley, up its vineyard-carpeted flanks, and the 360-degree vantages will leave you gaping. Hats off to the polyglot locals who call this home – not a business park, or a high rise, or a plastic tunnel in sight. Just that satisfying sense of being dwarfed by one of nature's great cathedrals. But this is precisely the problem with Franschhoek: like a beautiful woman, most of us think she's rather unapproachable and unaffordable. Who knew that in this valley of billionaires you can settle into a cosy en-suite cabin for a mere R250 pp?

• **HOW I MADE MY CHOICES**

With accommodation quality across all price points exceptional, I struggled to shorten my list of inspections and, after days of online research, settled on 42. I would happily stay in almost any of the establishments I inspected. Which is why this On the Chart focuses only on the best self-catering options; there will be a follow-up on the best B&Bs/hotels. And bear in mind that having a kitchen doesn't mean you have to cook – Franschhoek prides itself on being the country's gourmet capital – an appellation now fiercely contested by Stellenbosch ... easy enough to pop over the Helshoogte Pass and draw your own conclusions as to whom should carry the culinary crown. With the planned opening of Bukhara and Haiku opposite Le Quartier Français (thank you Mr Singh), Franschhoek is at least finally diversifying.



Best cluster of cottages for a group

RIVERSIDE COTTAGES AT LA BOURGOGNE

TripAdvisor ranking No. 13 of 39, Speciality Lodging

Step onto the swing bridge that straddles a burbling stream to reach these cottages, and you know you're in for something special. Built in the 1950s as three blocks to accommodate labourers, the six semi-detached cottages certainly aren't going to win any architectural awards, nor do they offer the size and privacy of Clementine, Rose or Bo La Motte (pages 43, 45 and 47) but they are homely and comfortable, embedded in a lush, established and treed garden that runs down to the river bank, and half the price. The first block comprises the two-bedroom units – each opening onto a shared patio area and garden views.

The four one-bedroom units are set back from here; of these, I favour Lemon – not only because it is the last cottage, offering a modicum of privacy (no walking past), but it also has the most inviting open-plan kitchen-dining-lounge space; a potential downside is it's furnished with twin beds. Taken as a whole, La Bourgogne accommodates 16, has a charming communal pool area, and is ideal for a group of friends to take over.

COST One-bedroom unit R850 (sleeps two), two-bedroom two-bathroom (showers only) unit R1 300 (sleeps four). Book all six cottages (sleeping 16) for two nights for R5 500. Small mattresses for extra children cost R50 per day; camp cots are free. All bookings include a complimentary wine tasting in the pretty tasting room. The cottages are a two-minute drive to the village.

CONTACT labourgogne.co.za

Best budget cottages for horse lovers (or romance)

COURCHEVEL COTTAGES

TripAdvisor ranking No. 49 of 59, B&Bs in Franschhoek

High up on the slopes of Chamonix farm is a swell of land on which the Courchevel (Heart of the Horse) estate is sprawled, its green fields criss-crossed with paddocks and studded with grazing horses. Perched on the edge are five former labourers' cottages, with the most stupendous views of the toy-like valley, four of them now transformed by the delightful Sonja Hellinger. A passionate horsewoman (this is the first place I've inspected where there's a paddock set aside for anyone who wants to come on holiday with their horse!), Sonja has unleashed her flair for decor, leaving the cottages rough and rustic, many with half-stripped walls, but spending money on lovely bathrooms and linen; the furniture choices are considered, every detail handpicked, and the whole shabby-chic atmosphere romantic. Three of the four cottages have large fireplaces, and all come stocked with wood, candles, delicious rusks, port, good filter coffee, toiletries – very generous given the price. Courchevel and Heart of the Horse, the only one-bedroom cottage set slightly further back, vie with Waterfall Lodge (page 42) as the most romantic boltholes. Die Ou Stalle is the least satisfying option – no picture-window views and no fireplace.

COST Scott's, Courchevel, Die Ou Stalle R1 200 each (all sleep four); Heart of the Horse R800 (sleeps two). From December rates go up by R150.

CONTACT courchevel.co.za





Best value luxury cottages with private pools

ROSE COTTAGES

TripAdvisor ranking No.12 of 39, Speciality Lodging

Wow, what a bargain. Peace, privacy, space, a fireplace, private pool, and views so beautiful you'll feel like pinching yourself. The warm and welcoming

Joan Archibald has built two solid cottages in her farm-garden, far enough apart to be completely private. The Stables (left, my preference)

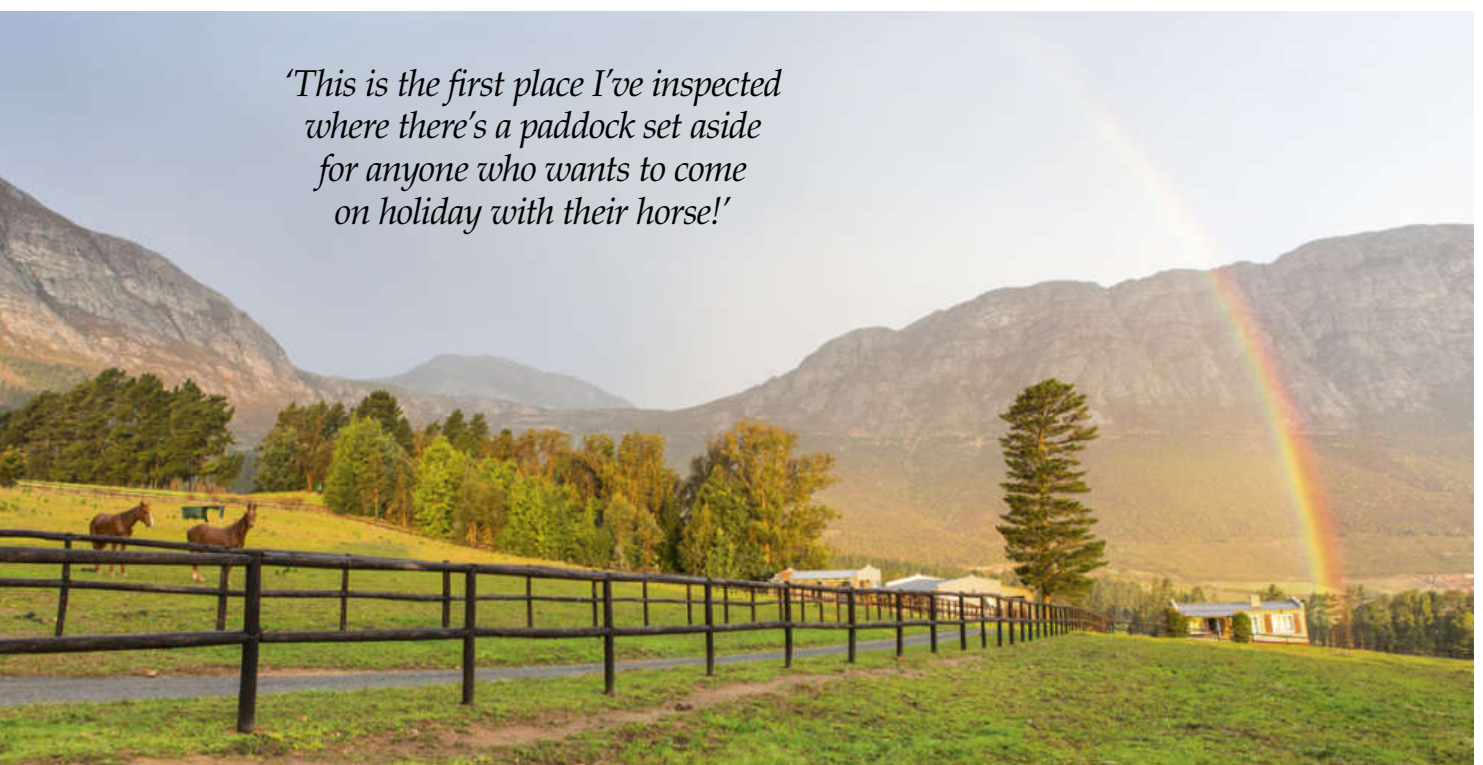
is a two-bedroom cottage among the vineyards; The Vineyard, a double-storey beyond The Stables, sleeps up to five in one downstairs en-suite bedroom and an upstairs mezzanine en-suite bedroom. The Cottage – a spacious wing that is part

of the main house and sleeping only two – is potentially the least private, though the adjoining main house (belonging to Joan's Joburg-based daughter) is seldom occupied, in which case you have the terrace and pool to yourself, and the vineyard and mountain views from here are phenomenal. The farm is a two-minute drive from the village.

COST The Stables R2 300 (sleeps four), The Vineyard R2 500 (sleeps five), The Cottage R1 600 (sleeps two). Minimum two-night stay from October to April. Serviced daily.

CONTACT rosecottages.co.za

'This is the first place I've inspected where there's a paddock set aside for anyone who wants to come on holiday with their horse!'



Best value in-village garden cottage for a couple

THE COTTAGE ON 55

Unrated

Dutch arrivals Erna and Guido Louwerse have transformed their garden cottage into the most delightful two-unit B&B of which the larger deluxe is equipped for self-catering. An open-plan, light-filled studio-style room, it has a quirky corner fireplace and doors opening onto the pool area where breakfast is served (included in the rate regardless of whether you choose to self cater, and you'll hardly feel like it given the restaurant choice just a short stroll down the street). Adjoining the studio room is another en-suite bedroom with a separate entrance from the garden – it's set up in such a way that it shouldn't affect your privacy when occupied.

COST R1 500 for the deluxe (sleeps two). Includes breakfast.

CONTACT cottageon55.com



Most stylish and luxurious in-village homes

EXPLORERS CLUB

Unrated

It's delightful being able to stroll to dinner at night, yet have the flexibility to prepare your own meals, but self-catering options usually forego style for convenience.

Not so with Jo Sinfeld's small portfolio of charming houses in the village, of which the best three – The Library, The Map Room and Explorers Club – he owns. For a large party of friends with children, Explorers Club is the one to book, but if you are looking for the loveliest rental in the village, The Library is it.

Downstairs are two enormous en-suite bedrooms that open to the pool and garden, in which the third en-suite bedroom 'cottage' is located, but the real draw is the upstairs living area: a huge airy open-plan living space, richly textured with carpets, books and beautiful *objets*, and opening onto a deck with magnificent mountain views. The two-bedroom Map Room enjoys a similar configuration, on a much smaller scale – it's gorgeous, affordable, and thus almost always booked.

COST The Map Room R2 300 to R3 000 (sleeps two to four); Explorers Club R4 300 to R7 200 (sleeps two to 10); The Library R4 950 to R6 850 (sleeps two to six).

Festive period surcharges apply.

CONTACT explorersclub.co.za



Most authentic farm-cottage accommodation

BO LA MOTTE FARM COTTAGES

TripAdvisor ranking No. 2 of 39, Speciality Lodging

The aim of the owners is to maintain Bo La Motte's historical rural character, on land that has been farmed since the late 1600s. This they have certainly achieved, with five unpretentious, comfortable and well-equipped cottages, of which two in particular – Goose and Milkwood – retain original features that provide an authentic farm-cottage character. Both are two-bedroom, two-bathroom cottages surrounded by lush grass lawns, recently upgraded but with their original open fireplaces and walls as thick as the length of your forearm. Pear Tree Cottage, the other two-bedroom alternative, has lovely views (though I should imagine less attractive when the dam in front is less full in high summer) but it's more modern (Cape Victorian style) with a Jetmaster rather than an open fireplace. If Goose and Milkwood are full, I'd personally opt for similarly priced Clementine Cottage or Rose Cottages (pages 43 and 45). Then again, Bo La Motte is one of Franschoek's most popular options, just two minutes' drive to the village, so you'll be lucky to bag any one of the five unless you book well in advance.

COST Goose, Milkwood and Pear Tree R2 100 (each sleep four); Oak R1 100 (sleeps two) and Pump House R900 (sleeps two). Extra children's beds or cots are available on request. Serviced every day except Sundays, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

CONTACT bolamotte.com

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with the next
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us to research.

WORTH A LOOK

Otter's Bend Lodge comprises five adjoining en-suite bedrooms, a dorm room and two cottages – all share access to Otter's Barrel, the fully equipped communal self-catering area next to the river, with a small pool. From R300 pp and R500 sharing. ottersbendlodge.co.za

Bird Cottage is a dinky two-bedroom cottage built in Cape Victorian style with great

views, located high up on the slopes of Montagne Farm – not easy to find, and a bit far to nip into town but at the base of a wonderful conservation area, making this an ideal retreat for hikers. R700 sharing; R1 400 for four (there is a small discount if four book). 021-876-2136

Stony Brook Cottages – a conversion of a string of labourers' cottages – are located on a very pretty wine

farm and comprise five units (four one-bedroom; one two-bedroom) that share a small communal pool. If you like privacy you'll find the proximity of neighbours unnerving but the setting is glorious. From R850 sharing. stonybrook.co.za

Gooding's Groves is located off the busy R45, so not quite as peaceful as the other suggestions on these pages;

that said I'd be happy enough in either of the two semi self-catering Barn Suites. R1 700 (sleeps four). There's also a separate two-bedroom house with its own pool. R2 600 (sleeps four). goodingsgroves.co.za

*Prices and rankings correct at time of going to print

Camp

KWANDO

- where the river sings -

Camp Kwando in the eastern Caprivi, Namibia, is situated between the Okavango Delta and the Victoria Falls. Nestled on the banks of the Kwando River, at Camp Kwando we invite you to experience the hidden treasures of an untamed land. Capture the spirit of the African bush, the hauntingly beautiful call of the African fish eagle and hippos snorting in the water, while sipping sundowners on the beautiful overhead deck or lazing by the pool as a relaxing alternative. Enjoy the thrill of fishing and the many other activities on offer which include game drives, boat cruises, mokoro and fishing tours and the discovery of local culture.

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reservations@campkwando.com or +264 64 461 677

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ONCE UPON A TREE TOP

GO BACK TO CHILDHOOD JOYS
AND SLEEP IN A TREE HOUSE.
WE LOVED THESE FOUR

1 SYCAMORE AVENUE

Midlands, KwaZulu-Natal

These whimsical tree houses are cleverly designed with wooden contraptions that open doors, and stairways that lead into cosy sleeping and living areas set high above the ground, with squirrels and birds for company. Light a fire (yes, in a wooden structure built on a tree) to fill your tree house with flickering light, before relaxing in a spa bath (good for two) or on the balcony with a glass of wine. Dinner and breakfast – included in the price of your stay – are served in the dining room, with its extensive views of Giant's Castle. The six unique tree houses (and two cottages) all have different characters and outlooks. For couples, stay in the tree houses Pegasus or Romantic – the latter delivers on its name and has a hammock on its deck. Fantasy and Planequarium are better suited to families.

RATES Tree houses from R795 pp DBB, cottages from R595 pp DBB.

CONTACT 033-263-5009, treehouse-acc.co.za

– TEAGAN CUNNIFFE

FROM
R795 pp
DBB

Six metres up,
couples will love
this one





2 MARC'S TREEHOUSE LODGE

Hoedspruit, Limpopo

Rustic but comfortable, all 12 tree houses at this riverine bushveld camp near Hoedspruit have stirring views over the Klaserie River and are generously spaced. Treehouse 2 is best, set in Jackalberry branches with a large curtain-less window so sunrise wakes you gently and Treehouse 5, with its sobriety-testing 17-step ladder, is the highest, most tree-house-like home here (the other nine are built on stilts within the tree canopy). Expect nyala grazing close by and eerie cries from thick-tailed bushbabies and hyenas complementing the sounds of water trickling below. A simple DBB option is available – the food is a bit generic (catering is for big groups) but there's great camaraderie around the fire in the evenings.

RATES From R980 pp sharing DBB.

CONTACT 071-842-5547, marcscamp.co.za

– MELANIE VAN ZYL



3 SPEEKHOUT

Baviaanskloof, Eastern Cape

Be swept into a magical world reminiscent of Enid Blyton's *The Faraway Tree* at Speekhout's tree house, a work of art sculpted into the arms of a large Karee tree. A double bed and two singles make up the sleeping quarters, with an extra bed for two in the living area, which has a fireplace. You'll feel connected to nature with tree-patterned sheets, leaves painted on the canvas ceiling, a retractable roof for stargazing, a hot outdoor shower and loo suspended in the tree canopy, no reception (only WhatsApp at the main house), four easy walks and natural swimming pools. Stock up on the basics in Willowmore (56 kilometres away) and visit Sophie's Choice, a sumptuous vintage shop and restaurant.

RATES From R250 pp sharing, kids R180 pp.

CONTACT WhatsApp 079-974-1365,

baviaans.co.za/speekhout

– MICHELLE HARDIE

4 VINDOUX TREEHOUSE GUEST FARM & SPA

Tulbagh, Western Cape

Three tree houses at Vindoux, a family-run fruit and wine farm, look out onto its game camp, home to black wildebeest, Cape mountain zebra and springbok. The fourth, as well as Tree Lodge, overlook plum orchards. If you choose, breakfast is served on your balcony against the dramatic backdrop of the Saronsberg Mountains. All the tree houses have access to braai facilities and sleep two people, while the self-catering Tree Lodge, which sleeps eight, is more suited to families and has a pool. The Honeymoon Suite is a short distance away along a shaded forest path. Fynbos therapy oils created on site and used in the spa come highly recommended.

RATES From R1 600 per couple B&B for the tree houses and R550 pp for Tree Lodge.

CONTACT 023-230-0635, vindoux.com

– TEAGAN CUNNIFFE

What's the last thing
you'd expect to find at the
edge of the Namib desert?

How about an ice cream parlour from the 1950s?

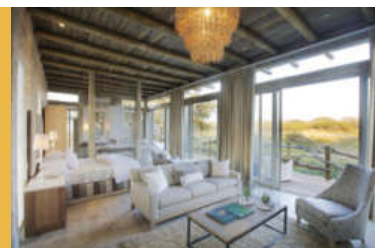
Opening on 9 October, the new Strand Hotel in Swakopmund, situated between the Atlantic Ocean and the Namib Desert, is going retro with onsite Café Mole: a homemade ice-cream parlour with a soda fountain, burgers and candy floss. There will also be a farmhouse deli, a micro-brewery, butchery, beer garden, sushi and other restaurants and bars. From R1 887 per room B&B (sleeps two).

strandhotelswakopmund.com



IT'S GOOD, IT'S IN GLASS

New upgraded suites at Kapama Karula Lodge in Kapama Private Game Reserve have been designed for maximum game viewing. Each of the 12 suites (two for families) has glass sliding doors, an indoor and outdoor shower and a heated pool on an elevated deck looking out over the Klaserie River. From R6 500 pp (kids under 12 are half price), including all meals, selected drinks and two game drives a day. kapama.co.za



ISLAND STYLIN'

Zanzibar's latest resort, set to open next month, mixes thatched island style with ultra-modern, Africa-inspired interiors. Tulia's 17 rooms are poised to set the scene for a five-star experience on the island's Pongwe Beach. From R4 100 per room (sleeps two), including breakfast, lunch, dinner, all-day snacks and selected drinks. tuliazanzibar.com

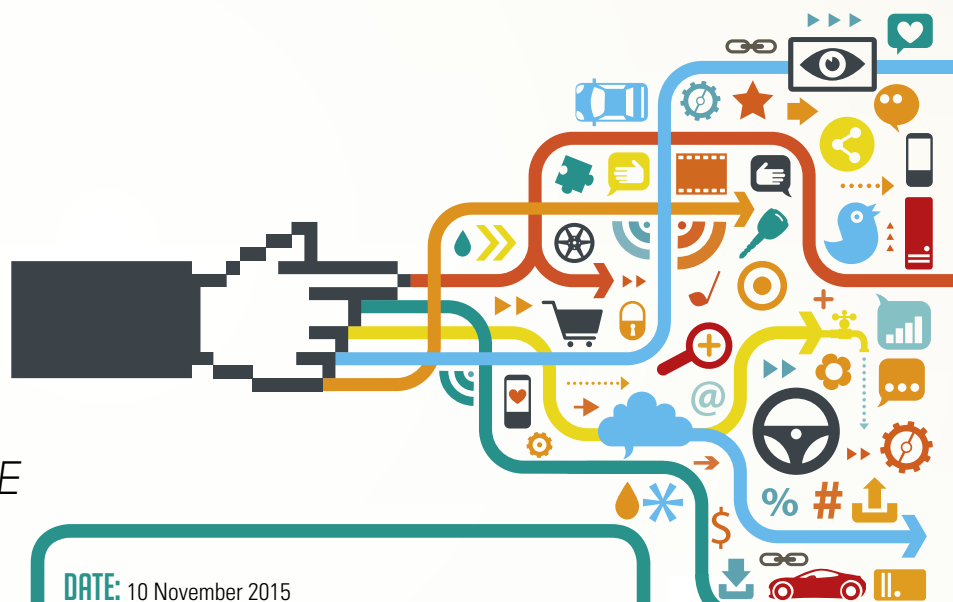


car DIGITAL DEALER CONFERENCE

THE INAUGURAL car DIGITAL DEALER CONFERENCE

Vehicle buyers now turn to the Internet and mobile devices to guide them in their purchasing decisions. They use search engines, online reviews and social media, and favour user-friendly experiences. This behaviour requires dealerships to adopt cutting-edge technologies and digital strategies to maintain their competitive advantage.

The CAR Digital Dealer Conference, in association with Gumtree, will show top OEMs and dealers how to stay ahead of the technology curve by delivering the largest array of industry speakers – local and international – and related networking opportunities that are designed to impart groundbreaking business strategies to the South African motor industry.



DATE: 10 November 2015

VENUE: JSE, One Exchange Square, Gwen Lane, Sandton

RATES: Early-bird rate: R1 695 a person
incl. 14% VAT; payable before 13 October 2015)
Late registration: R1 995 a person (incl. 14% VAT)
Group discount (5 or more delegates): R1 495 a person
(incl. 14% VAT)

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FOOD & DRINKS

FARE WORTH TRAVELLING FOR

*This dish will surprise and delight
with its unexpected flavours*

TASTES OF SPRING

LESS THAN AN HOUR OUT OF JOBURG IS ONE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S FINEST DINING EXPERIENCES. NIKKI WERNER TRAVELS TO EAT THERE AND CONCLUDES IT'S WORTH THE TRIP

was in Gauteng recently on a food hunt and the place that kept on coming up as unequivocally 'the best' was Restaurant Mosaic at The Orient. And with equal conviction, the descriptions followed. The decor was 'drapey' and 'boere baroque', the food was 'pretty' and had a 'painterly touch' and the chef and her mother – said one Pretoria woman with much affection – are 'like two little tinkerbells'.

Wanting to make up my own mind, I set off for this Moorish-styled castle in the direction of the Hartebeespoort Dam, >

where chef Chantel Dartnall cooks and her mum, Mari, runs The Orient hotel. Driving through a palette of Highveld browns my anticipation mounted, and on entering the Francolin Conservancy, where ericas appeared like blood-red pinpricks, so did my expectations.

There's a certain mystique surrounding these terracotta perimeter walls and the charmed existence within (only heightened on gaining access and noticing a sculpture of Mari with her cheetah in the private Tienie Pritchard Museum).

And then you meet them, these two kind-hearted women who share a keen attention to detail and maintain extremely high standards – all the while looking impeccably groomed.

When Chantel came to the table to explain the menu, a silk headscarf kept her pixie cut in check. I asked whether it was a print by Viennese artist Gustav Klimt. She smiled. 'Yes, Judith [referring to his well-known painting 'Judith I'] is inside.' Klimt's work is synonymous with Art Nouveau, a style influenced by natural forms, flowers and plants – as is Chantel's cooking.

This thread unfolded, starting with the dish Sunflower Spring – an exquisite study of carrot and orange blossom – and I became more aware of the surrounding nature than the Persian rugs and flocked wallpaper. Lunch danced along the top notes: fennel and hibiscus fragrance escaped the Alchemist's Infusion, tomato and lemongrass engulfed Garden of Eden. Highly focused flavours backed all the beauty.

As the afternoon wore on and the cheese trolley rolled away, dappled light filtered through the stained-glass window, echoing the ethereal quality of what I'd just consumed. There is a sprinkling of fairy dust about it all; the cheeky Pierneef in the Champagne Bar La Belle Epoque, the giraffes roaming somewhere outside and a South African princess working her magic from a parapet in Crocodile River Valley.



*'There's
a sprinkling
of fairy dust
about it all'*



MAKE THE MOST OF MOSAIC

LUNCH Allow time before finding your table to take in the Tienie Pritchard sculptures and the Rolls-Royces garaged behind glass. Book the Tiffany Private Dining Room (it has a view) and you may even see some game.

DINNER Overnight at The Orient Boutique Hotel. The Superior Suites are R2 800 for two people sharing. mari@the-orient.net

FOOD It's very popular so book two months ahead and go clear-headed and hungry. The menu starts at R625 pp for the four-

course Petite Degustation. reservations@restaurantmosaic.com

WINE Engage with sommelier Germain Lehodey and ask him to show you the cellar. The Connoisseur Wine Pairing starts at R325 pp and the Enthusiast Wine Pairing at R225 pp. **NOTE** Pricing is fair; a bottle of Secateurs Chenin is R98 while at fine-dining restaurants in Joburg it's nearly twice the price.

DON'T MISS Look out for the original vase by French Art Nouveau Artist Émile Gallé in the Champagne Bar. 012-3712-902, restaurantmosaic.com

SPIER SECRETS

AS PART OF THE SPIER SECRET FESTIVAL FROM 29 – 31 OCTOBER 2015, SPIER LAUNCHES ITS NEW BAKERY AND CAFÉ, THE HOG HOUSE, WITH CHEF PJ VADAS, AS WELL AS A PRODUCE-DRIVEN MARKET FOCUSING ON SUSTAINABILITY THAT WILL RUN EVERY SATURDAY. THE FESTIVAL LINE-UP INCLUDES FOOD MOVIE NIGHTS, SECRET DINNERS AND THE SPIER SECRET MARKET. FOR MORE INFO, VISIT SPIER.CO.ZA.



Chin-chin

Gins are coming into their own – new gin bars are opening up around the country. It's all about appreciating the nectar – and the botanicals that go into it (preferably responsibly foraged). Here are three newcomers:



NEW IMPORT

The Botanist Gin

WHERE Fans of peaty single malts will know Bruichladdich and this hails from the same distillery on the windswept Hebridean island of Islay.

DEFINED BY Twenty-two wild plants with intriguing Harry Potterish names (Mugwort, Creeping Thistle, Bog Myrtle) hand-picked by botanists Dr Richard and Mary Gulliver.

From R459 at selected retailers. thebotanist.com



LOCAL INDEPENDENT

Salt River Gin

WHERE Hope on Hopkins Distillery on Hopkins Street in Salt River, Cape Town, where a single-malt vodka spirit is created. The latter is redistilled to make the gin.

DEFINED BY Wild rosemary from the Winterhoek mountains and buchu from the Simonsberg – factor in the Newlands spring water and it's the Western Cape in a glass.

R330 from the distillery door. hopeonhopkins.co.za



LOCAL BIG BRAND

Cruxland Gin

WHERE In Paarl at KWV, the makers of Roodeberg and aged brandy, using 100 per cent grape-base spirit.

DEFINED BY Typically SA ingredients such as honeybush and rooibos and – here's the exotic selling point – Kalahari truffles. Don't think mushroomy aromas (it's not that kind of truffle) but a very subtle earthy note in a Juniper-forward gin.

R349, yuppiechef.com

Go to getaway.co.za for a list of gin bars

CHE THAT AGAIN?

Vuyi Qubeka finds a new Argentine sizzle in Jozi's ever-growing Maboneng Precinct

Why hide the kitchen in the back? That's Oscar Faraldo's take on grilling steak. Co-owner of the recently opened Che Argentine Grill, he explains that the idea of this authentic South American steakhouse, or parrilla, is to let the grill be the star of the show. And here, it certainly is. An open kitchen takes up the majority of the space in this refurbished warehouse. Stacks of hay dot a low-lit space with high ceilings, giving it a ranch-meets-warehouse feel. I whetted my appetite with a full-bodied Shiraz and began the feast with *empanadas de carne* – traditional pastries stuffed with beef, onion, green olives, eggs and red pepper. But it was the Bondiola Rellena main that got me: pork neck stuffed with blue cheese, bacon, paprika and prunes, and I added a rocket salad of tomato confit and goat cheese. There was no need for dessert. Most meals are meat-based, cooked on the asado (Argentine for braai, in both the physical and social context) and are traditional and simple. All the meat is free-range, grass-fed and additive free. There is a large à la carte menu and a main course costs about R110. The wine list is a mix of Argentine Shiraz and Malbec and some local options.

WHERE 303 Fox Street, Maboneng Precinct, Joburg. 011-614-0264



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We create chemistry

ON TRACK

TRIPPING

SOUTHERN AFRICAN ROUTES WORTH TAKING

Ever dreamt of hitting the road, stopping anywhere and sleeping where it suits you? David Rogers hired a camper and tried it out with his family of four

'We loved having a home on wheels and never having to unpack'



THE HOLIDAY ROAD



Although camper trips are not my first choice of assignment as a freewheeling *Getaway* journalist, they make perfect sense for our family.

They offer the joys of camping without the hassle of tents and we can follow our noses without too much planning. And for us that is a real holiday.

We set off from Cape Town at first light, with the boys (Liam, 11, and Dane, 10) asleep in the back, and followed the Voortrekkers' route over the Cape Fold Mountains into the interior. Vineyards gave way to fruit trees and open plains until timeless flat-topped buttes and mesas filled our wide horizon.

We reached the Lord Milner Hotel in Matjiesfontein with our stomachs grumbling. A doorman, dressed in period costume, welcomed our band of sleep-creased travellers with the same polished routine of songs and jokes he regales to VIPs off The Blue Train. By the time we had extracted the kids from the camper and into the hotel, his fibs had us chuckling through a hearty breakfast of eggs, bacon and sausage.

We drove through the Karoo and its windmill-studded farms, past tiny towns with church spires, before reaching the towering landmark of the Three Sisters, and eventually the fertile Orange River valley. Here we found a campsite at Gariep Dam and for the first of 16 nights plugged our modern caravan into the mains. *Voila!* The lights worked, the air-con droned, we had plugs, a microwave,

sink and stove. The motorhome was fitted with *alles*, from glasses to braai tongs, and we had dinner ready in a snap and then played Monopoly until our eyes grew heavy.

The next day we drove east towards the high ramparts of the Maluti Mountains, bordering Lesotho. The poplars were yet to turn their frostbitten gold, but the palates of pink, white and purple cosmos were a sight. A long-time friend, Lucy Hooley, who runs a horse riding stable nearby, suggested we stay at Lesoba Guest Farm midway between Fouriesburg and Clarens. It's a family-run farm offering camping and quaint cottages, with lambs to feed, fish to catch and yellow sandstone cliffs that reflect in the still waters. Here we got into slow time and enjoyed horse riding with Lucy and her husband Fritz.

The next day we stopped in Clarens, which is a haven for artists, with dozens of galleries, and then skirted the northern Maluti Mountains past Golden Gate National Highlands Park to the Basotho Cultural Village where the distinctive architecture, music and traditions of the Basotho people are proudly recorded.

More than a decade before, a medicine man told me predictions about one day being married and having children. This time, a much younger sangoma threw the bones for the boys and gave them good advice about not fraternising with 'bad people'.

Soon we were within sight of the Drakensberg. The high ramparts are all that

**'WE HAD DINNER
READY IN A SNAP
AND THEN PLAYED
MONOPOLY UNTIL
OUR EYES
GREW HEAVY'**



TOP Early morning mist near Elliot.
ABOVE Any place was a good place for a quick snack.



remain of a deep layer of volcanic basalt that once covered the entire region, and beneath are older deposits of sandstone, shale and conglomerate, all of which tell a fascinating story of deposition, erosion, upheaval and continental drift.

We started our explorations at Royal Natal National Park. It's a special place, which has the gushing Tugela River at its heart and the rocky arms of the Drakensberg spread on either side, creating the Amphitheatre. We camped on the wide lawns at Mahai and spent our days exploring the mountains and swimming in the crashing waters of the Cascades. There were also trout to catch, but only on fly, which miffed Liam who stood on the banks with his conventional rod looking hungrily at the swirling fish.

After two nights, we headed for Dragon Peaks Mountain Resort in the Central Berg, which was within melodious earshot of the Drakensberg Boys Choir School and beneath the mighty Cathkin Peak. Liam was delighted to find he could fish the giant carp and tilapia any way he pleased and Dane, who is always

happiest when he is wet, was thrilled to find a huge pool.

The busy Easter weekend and three days of wet weather was approaching and we decided to find some solid shelter in a chalet at Giant's Castle. With its rolling hills, stunning vistas and wonderful walks, Giant's has always been particularly special for Jen, who came here often as a child – it was here that her dad's ashes were scattered when she was just five.

Standing on a bank of the Bushman's River, where he had so loved to fish, soothed by the flowing water and glorious views, the boys shed tears as they thought about the grandfather they had never met. But when Dane told his long-lost grandpa about iPads, mobile phones and other technology, the serious mood lifted as we fell about thinking that he must be having a chuckle at us all.

We visited Main Caves at Giant's Castle, where Dane, in particular, was fascinated by the spectacular rock paintings that record so much history of the San. Shamans did most of the art during a state of trance and it is >



**'HERE WE GOT INTO
SLOW TIME
AND ENJOYED
HORSE RIDING'**

TOP The kids got wet and wild at the Cascades, Royal National Park. **ABOVE** Dane poses with his horse saddled up for a ride through the Maluti Mountains at Fouriesberg.



interesting that the hallucinogenic imagery bears very strong similarities with other artworks produced by Aborigines on the other side of the world in Australia.

A storm was now approaching and, like the San who fled the icy winter weather, we headed south over bumpy, but beautiful roads and through rolling lavender-covered fields. We were now in the picturesque Midlands, known for its art and crafts and little towns stitched together to form the Midlands Meander.

At Ardmore Ceramic Art, Fée Halsted has kindled the creative spirits of numerous untrained local artists over 25 years, producing an exuberant style of pottery which has found its way into collections in New York and London. The acclaimed auction house Christie's has acknowledged Ardmore artworks as 'modern-day collectibles'.

We were tempted to linger in the Midlands and partake of the artisan beer, chocolate, honey and crafts but with black clouds looming, we headed for the coast.

The boys were yearning for a city fix and begged us to take them to uShaka Marine World in Durban. We arrived in our van at first light and joined the Easter crowds streaming in. The boys could barely contain themselves. All day, they were a blur as they swam, viewed sharks from a cage and rode water slides. But as the light started to fade, so did they, and we had no plans of where to go or where to sleep.

Not being familiar with South Coast campsites, I had bought a camping and caravanning magazine and read about what seemed to be a little jewel on the coast. It was called Mac Nicols at Bazley Beach and the author wrote that anyone who wanted to see how a caravan site should be run should go there.

The resort, just 80 metres from the beach and on the shores of the Ifafa Lagoon, has been family-run since 1971 and is the sort of place where families come year after year. As luck would have it, we found a place. Mac Nicol's is run with heart and care. There are soccer games, boat cruises, use of canoes, outings to private beaches, night-time crab hunts, downhill bike rides, morning tea and scones at the pool – and all of these extras are free.

We loved Mac Nicol's and stayed and stayed and stayed . . . until our time was spent and, after 16 days on the road, we set off for home. We stopped at the foot of Barkly Pass for a night and then spent our last night, somewhat sadly, on the banks of the Serpentine River in Wilderness.

We loved our adventure: having picnics, playing old-fashioned games and sleeping head to toe. What an intimate camping experience it had been in our mobile house – and how easy compared to the hassle of tents. I would never have thought it possible, but I had, after all these years, evolved into a caravanning kinda guy. **G**



'WE LOVED MAC NICOL'S AND STAYED AND STAYED AND STAYED . . . UNTIL OUR TIME WAS SPENT'

TOP Kids, bikes, fishing rods and warm water all came together at Mac Nicol's. **ABOVE** Happy times for Liam casting for bass at Lesoba.



CAPE TOWN TO DURBAN DIRECTORY

➔ CAMPER VAN HIRE

We hired a four-sleeper Avalon Mercedes-Benz Sprinter. The usual rate for December is R1 870 per day with optional insurance of R400 per day. Take the insurance for peace of mind. If you reverse into a Mercedes in this big beast without insurance, it will turn into a very expensive holiday. It was not a cheap holiday, but what made it special for us was having a home on wheels and never having to unpack. 011-230-5200, maui.co.za

➔ THINGS TO DO

Ride a horse in Fouriesburg.

The hosts are great and I wish we'd had time for an overnight ride (on request). From R120 per horse per hour. 072-371-9732, www.fouriesburginfo.co.za

Visit the Basotho Cultural Village

in Golden Gate Highlands National Park. 058-255-0909, sanparks.co.za

Take a guided walk in the Giant's Castle Game Reserve to see the cave paintings, just 30 minutes from the main rest camp. Day visitors pay R35 pp conservation fee. 033-845-1000, kznwildlife.co.za

Invest in art or just browse the stunning pieces at Ardmere Ceramic Art. From R645, depending on the piece you

choose. 033-940-0034, ardmoreceramics.co.za

Join the throngs at Piggly Wiggly

in the Midlands, which offers everything from candle dipping (from R60 pp) to miniature train rides for kids (R20 pp). 033-234-2911, pigglywiggly.co.za

Get wet and wild at uShaka Marine World.

Wet and wild combination is R199 per adult and R158 for kids. 031-328-8000, ushakamarineworld.co.za

Walk the Giant Kingfisher Trail in Wilderness.

There are an abundance of turacos and a stunning waterfall at the end of the trail. Canoes for hire if you want to explore the winding course of the Serpentine River. R32 pp conservation fee per day. 044-877-0046, sanparks.co.za

Visit the Wild Oats Community Farmers Market in Sedgefield.

It's open on Saturdays and has got to be the best market in South Africa. 044-883-1177, wildoatsmarket.co.za

➔ PLACES TO STAY

Gariep Forever Resort, Gariep Dam

A good stopover with large open areas, a restaurant, putt-putt and all the stuff you can expect at a resort. Pick a stand near the dam. Stands with

electricity are R290 – R370 pp (four people). 051-754-0045, forevergariep.co.za

Lesoba Guest Farm, Fouriesburg

Stock up on self-catering supplies in Fouriesburg and enjoy a farm-style welcome, feed the lambs and watch reflections in the water. Fridge and kitchen available. Stands from R400 (four people). 058-223-0444, wheretostay.co.za/lesoba

Royal Natal Mahai Camp, uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Park

Fantastic open sites, but some of the lower sites can get a bit muddy if it rains. R400 (four people). 033-845-1000, kznwildlife.com

Dragon Peaks Mountain Resort, Drakensberg

Camping costs from R120 pp and budget accommodation from R240 pp. 036-468-1031, dragonpeaks.com

Giant's Castle, Drakensberg

There's no camping here but there are cottages with garden or mountain views. From R600 pp, including breakfast. 033-845-1000, kznwildlife.com

Mac Nicol's, Bazley Beach

This place was made for kids and has a great holiday programme. The shop does daily special takeaways and you can buy everything from boerewors to beers. Camping

from R150 per adult and from R75 for kids.

039-977-8863, macnicol.co.za

Wilderness Ebb-and-Flow Rest Camp, Wilderness

A campsite between the forest and mountains. Pick a stand on the south side near the river. From R380 per stand for four people. 044-877-1197, sanparks.co.za

➔ FOOD

Have lunch at Cleopatra

Mountain Farmhouse in the Drakensberg – a highly recommended experience. Take care over the bumpy dusty roads as they're not great for motorhomes. 033-267-7243, cleomountain.co.za

SPECIAL OFFER

Maui Motorhome Rentals is offering *Getaway* readers an exclusive rental rate of R1 450 per day (including VAT) on the four-sleeper motorhome (4STL) for December 2015. To qualify quote the following reference number when making your booking: GM122015. Price excludes contract fee and liability cover. 011-230-5092, maui.co.za

*Prices correct at the time of going to print

GEAR

TRIED-AND-TESTED PRODUCTS

POWERtrip

KEEP YOUR SMART DEVICES JUICED UP ON THE ROAD; ALWAYS. WE TESTED EIGHT TO SEE HOW FAR THEY'LL TAKE YOU ON A TRIP FROM JOZI. BY MELANIE VAN ZYL

MODERN INNOVATION POWER BANK 16000mAh

R825,
powerbankcharger.co.za

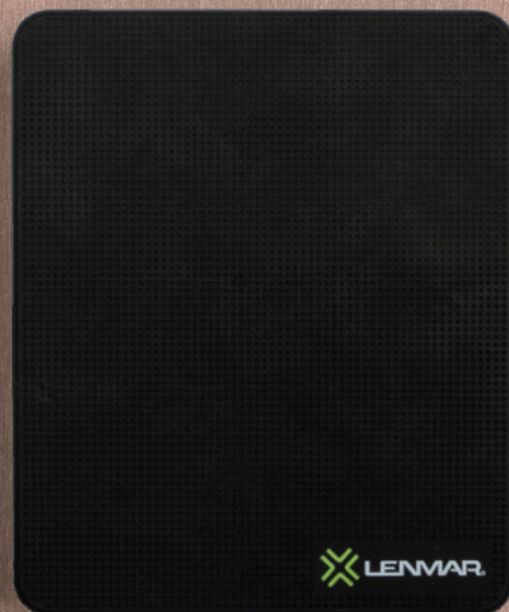
GETS YOU TO Touws River (11h40)
WEIGHT 350g
INPUT 2A
OUTPUT 2,1A
WARRANTY One year
TESTING NOTES The slick aluminium alloy shell surface is the same as that of the MacBook Pro. This is a good option for the design-conscious, but it took a while to charge up compared to the others.



LENMAR MUTANT 20800mAh PORTABLE POWER PACK

R1 699, be-akin.co.za

GETS YOU TO Anywhere in SA (over 20h)
WEIGHT 493g
INPUT 2A
OUTPUT 2,4A
WARRANTY One year
TESTING NOTES This is a big daddy. It's amazingly compact for its capacity, but too heavy to pack for a hike. Best used for camping or as a charging station at home.



TEST CONDITIONS

Each power bank was charged fully and then plugged into a TomTom Go 5000 navigation device, a nifty GPS (R4 399, capeunionmart.co.za) that's easy to use and plot trips. Then we used each power bank on a trip from Joburg to surrounding areas to record the length of time it kept the GPS juiced up. For example, the 2600mAh Powerstick powered the TomTom for three hours and 35 minutes all the way to Ladysmith.

POWERTRAVELLER POWERMONKEY EXPLORER 6000mAh

R1 300, duesouth.co.za

GETS YOU TO Howick (4h30)
WEIGHT 286g
INPUT 2A
OUTPUT 2A
WARRANTY One year
TESTING NOTES Ultra-tough, compact, water-proof and shock-proof, this baby belongs outdoors. Both the digital percentage indicator and the extra-length cables are examples of good

design, but at a cost. The only thing I was bleak about is that it didn't fit nicely back in its box after use.

✦ The Solsave my-powa! solar power bank is a similar but more affordable option at R500, but only has a 2200mAh capacity, which will get you to Bela Bela (2h10). outdoorwarehouse.co.za



POWERSTICK 2600mAh

R250,
capeunionmart.co.za

GETS YOU TO Ladysmith
(3h35)

WEIGHT 200g

INPUT 0,5A

OUTPUT 1A

WARRANTY One year

TESTING NOTES The power level stayed at four for a long time, but dropped quickly from three to zero. This unit is great for emergencies and can live in your backpack or handbag.



GP PORTABLE POWERBANK 12000mAh

R599, glagencies.co.za

GETS YOU TO Three
Sisters (8h)

WEIGHT 250g

INPUT 2A

OUTPUT 2,4A

WARRANTY One year

TESTING NOTES This unit charges two devices at once. It also has a 2A input so charges quite quickly. A fair price for its capacity, it's good for charging tablets.



ENERGIZER 5600mAh POWER BANK

R499, makro.co.za

GETS YOU TO Hoedspruit (5h)

WEIGHT 151g

INPUT 1,5A

OUTPUT 2,4A

WARRANTY

Two years

TESTING NOTES

A good-looking, palm-size black unit (if a little dumpy) that has good capacity for its affordable price and dual USB charging ports. No frills here.

RED-E 6000mAh POWERBANK

R495, outdoorwarehouse.co.za

GETS YOU TO Pietermaritzburg (5h15)

WEIGHT 131g

INPUT 1A

OUTPUT 2,1A

WARRANTY Lifetime

TESTING NOTES A sleek well-designed unit with dual USB ports, it can

charge three devices simultaneously. I've owned one like this for the past year and take it everywhere. Exceptional value for money and the only unit we tested with a lifetime guarantee.



DID YOU KNOW?

You can buy a power bank to jumpstart your car. The Boltpower Auto Jump Starter G06 boasts 16 500mAh, weighs 1,2kg, has 12V clamps to start up a dead battery and powers a compressor. Pretty neat, huh? R2 800, lumenoled.co.za

BEFORE YOU BUY

Capacity is indicated by milliamp hours (mAh) – the higher the number the more charge the battery can hold and the higher the price tag, but this also means the unit is bulkier and requires a longer charge time (often overnight). A power bank will not always deliver its full capacity because energy is lost through heat generated and voltage conversion. Roughly 2500mAh is needed to fully charge an iPhone 5c.

The output and input rating is indicated by amps – a higher amp figure means your device (output) and power bank (input) will charge faster. Some tablets cannot be charged by low-amp units – 2,4A seems to be the standard amperage needed to charge one.

PLUS BONUS CANVAS ACCESSORIES!



SPRITE TOURER SP
 INCLUDING EXTENSION AWNING, SIDE WALL
 SET AND TRAVEL BLANKET*

FROM ONLY
R2,825 P/M (INCL. VAT)

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PRESENTING THE SPRITE TOURER SP IN

MAPUNGUBWE NATIONAL PARK

LIMPOPO | GPS COORDINATES: S 22° 12' 25", E 29° 22' 20"

HOLIDAY
 8 of

52

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- Recommended retail price (incl. canvas accessories*): R210,635
- Recommended discounted retail price (incl. canvas accessories*): R194,395
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- Balloon payment (30%): R56,028
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- Interest rate linked: 10,99%
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- Monthly admin fee: R57
- Above amounts all incl. VAT

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WHERE THE SUN DON'T SHINE

NOTHING RUINS A SEASIDE HOLIDAY LIKE SUNBURN, SO PACK ONE OF OUR FIVE TOP EASY-TO-ERECT SHELTERS. BY MELANIE VAN ZYL



SPORT-BRELLA

R1 100,
outdoorwarehouse.co.za

UPF 50+

WEIGHT 4kg

FLOOR AREA Depends on how high the umbrella is, but opens to about 2,4m wide

HEIGHT 140cm

PEOPLE 2

ASSEMBLY TIME

30 seconds

WATERPROOF

Water repellent

FEATURES Smartly designed, this umbrella-cum-shelter is made of thick hardy material and has tie-downs and wind vents to keep it from blowing away in moderate wind. It also has internal pockets for storage, side flaps and zipped windows.

TEST CONDITIONS

Each shelter was chosen for portability, ease of set-up and protection from the sun. All shelters were timed to see how long they took to assemble and then assessed for wind resistance and cool features.

TECH EXPLAINED

All the shelters tested here are designed to block dangerous UV rays emitted by the sun. This is indicated by an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF). Like sunscreen, the higher the number the better the defence. A UPF rating of 50+ will shield your skin from about 97 per cent of harmful rays.

BURN WARNING

Just because you're under a shelter, doesn't mean you're 100 per cent safe from the sun. Sand reflects harmful rays too so it's best to still apply ample sunscreen.



POP-UP ALTERNATIVE

Pop-ups (such as the one above) that fold into a disc shape can be awkward to pack. Try the two-person Campmaster Beach Shelter 200. It folds up into a small-tube shape and is called a cabana and erects more like a normal hiking tent. UPF50+. R499, makro.co.za

KAUFMANN OUTDOOR POP-UP BEACH TENT

R419,
kaufmannoutdoor.co.za

UPF 30+
WEIGHT 0,64kg
FLOOR AREA
110cm x 140cm
HEIGHT 100cm
PEOPLE 2
ASSEMBLY TIME
21 seconds
WATERPROOF Can
withstand light rain
FEATURES The pop-up
is effortless and five
sand pockets keep the
shelter in place.



CHECKPOINT FLASH BEACH/PICNIC GAZEBO

R1 200, campworld.co.za

UPF 50+
WEIGHT 8kg
FLOOR AREA
220cm x 220cm
HEIGHT 210cm
PEOPLE 4
ASSEMBLY TIME
2,28 minutes

WATERPROOF Yes
FEATURES The
backpack-style carry
bag, adjustable rear
wall and ground mat
are neat. Guy ropes
provide some wind
resistance.



Go to page 112 for
more summer gear

THE UMBRELLA MAN OXFORD BEACH UMBRELLA

R109,
theumbrellaman.co.za

UPF 30+
WEIGHT 1,5kg
FLOOR AREA
Opens to 1,65m wide
HEIGHT 185cm
PEOPLE 2
ASSEMBLY TIME
20 seconds
WATERPROOF Yes
FEATURES Great price
but not great for wind.
Available in blue or red.

OZTRAIL POP-UP BEACH DOME

R499,95,
seagullindustries.co.za

UPF 30+
WEIGHT 1,9kg
FLOOR AREA
115cm x 235cm
HEIGHT 115cm
PEOPLE 2
ASSEMBLY TIME
18 seconds
WATERPROOF Yes
FEATURES Sand pegs
and sand pockets for
wind resistance. Body-
length heavy-duty floor.





LIVE THE BRAAI LIFE

BRAAI THE BELOVED COUNTRY

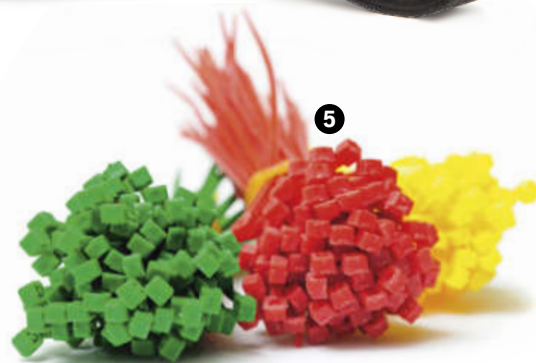


In South Africa, when you think braai, you think CADAC. CADAC has been part and parcel of the South African lifestyle for more than 60 years and has watched many a cheap imitator come and go. It is your key to unlocking the simple pleasures offered by stylish outdoor living. Whether hiking in the Drakensberg, having a skottel braai at the rugby or simply lounging on your patio, CADAC will make you feel right at home. CADAC's new generation braai solutions have been designed with your outdoor lifestyle needs in mind. Our charcoal braais and innovative gas braais offer you the ideal choice. Isn't it time to make the most of your leisure time and join our outdoor world?

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HOW TO

TRAVEL ADVICE FROM EXPERTS



PIMP YOUR RECOVERY KIT

THIS STANDARD 4X4 RECOVERY KIT HAS THE ESSENTIALS, BUT ADD A FURTHER 13 ITEMS AND PREPARE FOR ANYTHING - NO MATTER WHAT THE SITUATION, SAY *GETAWAY*'S EXPERIENCED 4X4 DRIVERS CHRIS DAVIES AND TYSON JOPSON



TYSON SAYS:



'While off-roading in Botswana, this recovery bag was essential for getting us out of sticky situations. We also noticed there was quite a bit of extra room in it. So, we put together a list of key items that we could fit into the bag to turn it into a "super-recovery kit". Extra cost: R1 115, and the items can be bought from most hardware stores.'

1 REFLECTIVE VEST

From R55

It's not always necessary in the bush, but could come in handy on the highway en route. Safety first.

2 TYRE PRESSURE GAUGE

From R95

The only thing less accurate than a Cape Town weather report is the tyre pressure gauge at a fuel station. Check your own pressures for total peace of mind.

5 CABLE TIES

From R30 for 60 ties

If MacGyver was made from plastic he'd be a cable tie. The uses are practically endless. Get a range of sizes from 100mm (light duty) to 600mm (heavy duty).

9 SEED NET

From R175

Tall grass and overgrown trails can clog up your radiator. Having a seed net over the front means you won't spend hours cleaning it.

13 ROPE

From R60 for 10m

Always useful in a pinch. Don't buy shorter than 10m (you can always double up for short ties) and get outdoor braid that floats on water.

10 HEAD TORCH

From R125

Disaster doesn't always strike in the daytime. Plus, a head torch is also good for carrying out undercarriage inspections.

6 TUBELESS TYRE REPAIR KIT

From R120

Repairing a 4x4 tyre isn't all that difficult. It's tubeless, but it's very similar to fixing a bicycle tyre. Most kits come with step-by-step instructions. Get a few valves too.



3 SPARE HEADLIGHT GLOBES

From R50 for a pair

(depending on type of globe)
They're small and because they're vehicle-specific the chances of you finding the right type when you're in the gramadoelas are slim.

4 RATCHET STRAPS

From R170 for a pair

These are great for securing bulky items and can even be used to secure a broken leaf spring for short distances. Buy a pair, because in the bush Murphy makes the laws.

7 HAND CLEANER

From R50 for a tub

Gloves are great for tyre changes and large jobs, but when things get finicky sometimes only raw fingers will do. Find a cleaner that contains silica grit for the best results.

8 MULTIPURPOSE SPRAY

From R35 for R150ml

This light-duty lubricant can be used to dry wet electrical equipment, ease seized nuts and prevent corrosion. You'll rarely need more than a small 150ml can on a trip.

11 TAPE

Duct tape from R30 for 5m

Silicone tape from R100 for 5m
Duct tape is great for binding, repairing tears and temporary waterproofing. Self-fusing silicone tape is also waterproof and impervious to fuel, oil, acids and solvents and can be used on radiator hoses, fuel lines, exhausts and fan belts.

12 FUSES

From R20 for a pack of eight (various sizes)

Sometimes the smallest things can leave you stranded. A fuse is one such thing. Pack spares – they're cheap and don't take up much room.

The basic recovery kit featured is standard with Avis 4x4 rentals (avissafarirental.co.za) and can be bought from Alu-Cab for R1 200. They'll also pimp your kit on request. sales@alu-cab.co.za





ROUTE 2: KUBU TO KUKONJE ISLAND

In this three-part series, *Getaway*, Avis Safari Rental and BFGoodrich take you to some lesser-known places that only a trustworthy 4x4 with the right tread can get you to. This month, we head to Botswana's Kukonje Island

On the eastern rim of Botswana's Sua Pan, Kukonje Island lies half forgotten at the end of a treacherous trail. About 40 kilometres west, much-loved Kubu Island attracts many 4x4 enthusiasts, but undeveloped Kukonje –

with its equally towering baobabs – is often overlooked. Why? That daunting trail might have something to do with it. Even in the dry, the north-south access road can be soft as it nears the pan, and in the wet,

small stream beds fill with wheel-sucking mud. The island is seven kilometres from the pan's edge and is inaccessible when flooded – but it's not all doom and gloom. When conditions dry up, from May to October, a 4x4

with BFGoodrich T/A K02 tyres will get you to Kukonje, no problem. You'll glide across the pan wondering what all the fuss was about, and set up camp on what might be Botswana's most beautiful baobab island.





DO IT

Camping on Kukonje is free and there are no formal stands or any facilities. You must sign in at the Kwadiba veterinary check point (open 6am to 10pm) before crossing the pan to the island.

GETTING THERE

From Kubu, head south to the A30 and then 70 kilometres east to the Tlapana vet fence gate. About 50 metres past the gate, turn north onto a rough Jeep track where the fun begins. It's 47 kilometres to the Kwadiba checkpoint and the track is bumpy when dry and treacherously muddy when wet. At Kwadiba, turn west through the gate for the last seven kilometres across the pan, which may be impassable if flooded. Ask at the checkpoint before attempting a crossing.

GO ONLINE

Visit getaway.co.za or scan the QR code below to see more, and to watch a video of our experience on this lesser-known adventure.



THE TYRES AND VEHICLE THAT WILL TAKE YOU THERE

Economical on tar and built to be the best off-road, BFGoodrich All-Terrain T/A K02 tyres will take you there - wherever there is. bfgoodrich.co.za
Avis Safari Rental has a fleet of fully kitted off-road vehicles, equipped to make any 4x4 adventure a reality. avissafarirental.co.za





Aaaaaaaaw man!

It's spring, the time for newborns and fuzzy, wobbly cuteness. Photographer Shem Compion captures the beauty of growing up with these photographs of young wildlife. Words by Catherine Rudolph

A lion cub with its mother in MalaMala Game Reserve in Kruger National Park. Lion cubs, also called lionets, are kept hidden by their mothers for up to two months before they are introduced to the rest of the pride. The mothers deposit their youngsters in dense thickets or stony koppies and care for them there. This not only protects them from predators, but also from newly dominant males who will kill any offspring they haven't personally sired. In a pride, lionesses often give birth around the same time and form a crèche, in which they take turns as protectors and nursemaids. They will even care for neglected cubs, allowing the offspring of their sisters to suckle, giving them a chance to survive.



A leopard cub with a carcass dinner, caught by its mother and dragged up a tree in Mashatu Game Reserve, Tuli Block in Botswana. Weighing only half a kilogram and blind for the first 10 days of their lives, newborn cubs are very vulnerable. When they open them, their eyes are pale blue in colour and gradually change to a translucent golden green that gives the adults their mesmerizing stare. The cubs aren't born with spots, but develop the distinctive leopard markings, known as rosettes, as they mature. They will stay with their mothers for more than two years, learning to hunt and survive.

A hyena mother gives her pup a good clean in Mashatu Game Reserve in Botswana. Neither feline nor canine, hyenas exist in a class of their own called hyaenidae. Spotted hyena live in matriarchal societies, formed within territorial clans that defend their home ranges against intruders. Cubs are raised in the den, which is the centre of clan activity. The cubs are also called whelps and suckle for the first year after birth, and then begin to follow their mothers in search of food. Before they are old enough to join the hunting and scavenging forays, they stay in the den with an adult hyena who is given the task of babysitting.



A meerkat mother and baby are alerted by the buzz of a wasp in Tswalu in the Kalahari Game Reserve. Young meerkats, called pups, venture out of the burrows to learn how to play and forage in the world above the surface. In the early stages, however, they are quite timid and struggle to distinguish between predatory birds and aeroplanes – both will send them diving for cover. Meerkats live in groups called mobs, consisting of two to three meerkat families, who share a number of rotating burrows. Distinguished for their ability to stand on their back legs, meerkats even nurse their babies in the upright position. Males are also responsible for infant care, with parents and siblings taking shifts in looking after the pups.





An elephant calf dances amid a dust cloud created by its herd on a river bank in Mashatu Game Reserve, Tuli Block in Botswana. At birth, calves weigh about the same as a refrigerator and consume up to 11 litres of milk a day for the first two years of their lives. They usually keep close to their mothers, who are protective of their babies after carrying them for the 22-month pregnancy. At first, babies have no notion of how to use their trunks, swinging them to and fro, tripping over them and sucking them, as human infants do with their thumbs. All female elephants will watch over the young and the whole herd moves at the pace of its smallest and slowest members.

BEST TIME FOR BABIES

During the rainy season in Southern Africa, from November to March, dusty landscapes are transformed into lush grasslands. These are ideal conditions for young creatures, with the birthing of foals, fawns and calves occurring en masse. The plains provide food for grazing herds, who in turn become prey for predators. Lion, wild dog, cheetah and hyena all take advantage of the good hunting, which makes it an excellent time for birthing their cubs and pups too.

WHERE TO GO

Best for young leopard Mashatu Game Reserve, Tuli Block, Botswana

In the eastern part of Botswana where the Limpopo and Shashe rivers converge, Mashatu has open plains, grassland, riverine forests, rocky hills, marshland and sandstone ridges. It provides plenty of opportunity for sighting the young of all species. From R6470 pp sharing for a luxury suite in Mashatu Lodge and R4600 pp sharing for a tent in Mashatu Tent Camp (both include all meals and game drives). 031-761-3440, mashatu.com

Best for cheetah cubs and plains game Tamboti Tented Camp, Kruger National Park

This small camp is on the banks of the Timbavati River, on the western boundary of Kruger. The surrounding tamboti trees attract kudu and black rhino while the sweet grass on the nearby open plains attract browsers and, in turn, hungry cheetah. From R535 for two (self-catering). 013-735-6355, sanparks.co.za

**Best for wild dog pups
Mpila Camp, Hluhluwe-Imfolozi**
Mpila Camp has magnificent views of the wilderness area and the open flats it overlooks are ideal for sightings of cheetah, numerous buck and rare wild dogs. From R820 for two in a safari tent (self-catering). 033-845-1000, kznwildlife.com

**Prices correct at time of going to print*

CONJURING THE CAPRIVI

It's the late 1800s and an arid-orange Namibia is under German rule. The rest of Africa is being carved up by European powers laying lines over a map and in the colonial clamour it's agreed that Germany will forsake its claim to Zanzibar in exchange for a narrow 500-kilometre-long finger of land. This is a strategic move as German South-West Africa had little water and German Chancellor Leo von Caprivi had a grand vision: he wished to create a passage to Tanganyika and thus to the Indian Ocean for trading. But had he looked a little closer at the map, he would have noticed that Victoria Falls stood in his way, with a 100-metre drop to thwart his ambition. Once South Africa took the reins in running South-West Africa, the Caprivi Strip became a military zone and you can still spot remnants of old army bases in the national parks. During the Angolan Bush War (1966-1989), the strip was important as it bordered four countries. In 2013 this odd strip of land was renamed the Zambezi Region.



WALKING WILD WITH THE WISE GIANTS

*Ever wanted to get up close to elephants?
Getaway's Vuyi Qubeka did, so she
headed to Namibia's Zambezi Region.
Photographs by Melanie van Zyl*

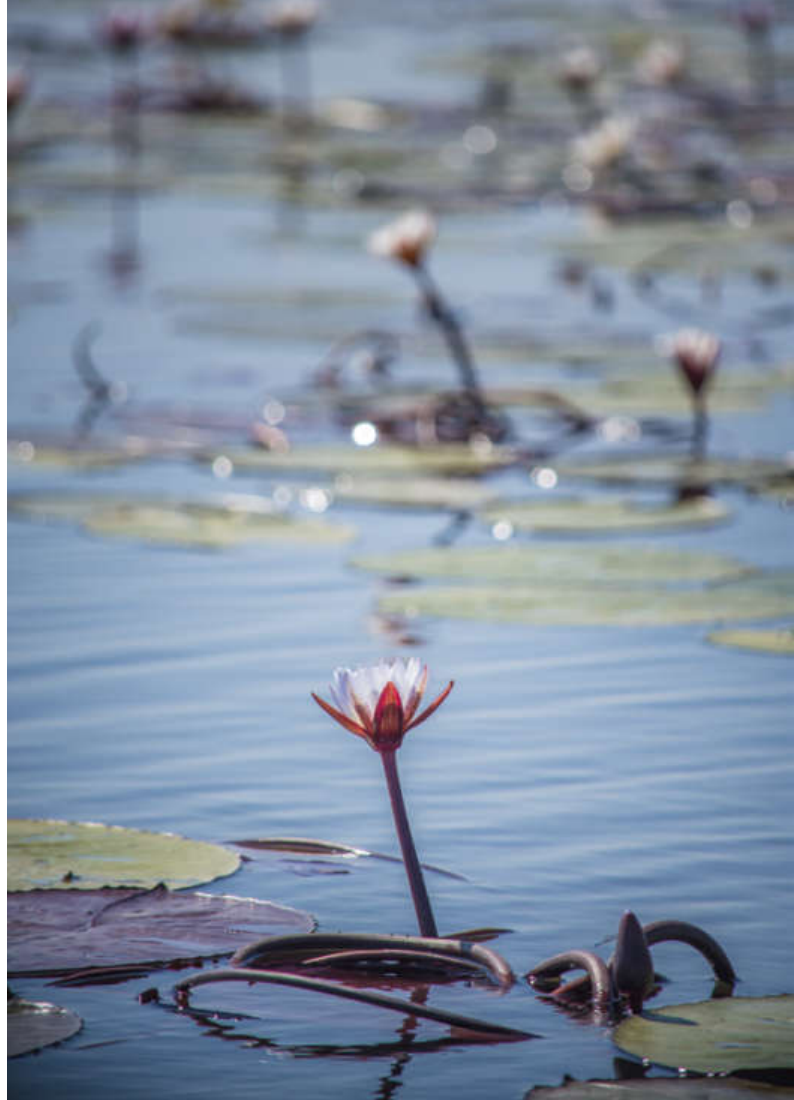




We witnessed a parade of elephants drinking at sunset at the Horseshoe Lagoon within the Bwabwata National Park.



'Elephants have a grace and gentleness that's palpable. In just a few days I'd seen so many, in so many different ways. Now I got the feeling that nature was just showing off'



LEFT TO RIGHT Dancers at Namushasha Heritage Centre, a museum showcasing the history and traditions of the Lozi and Koloto tribes; waterlilies are used to make traditional dishes; the author takes in a cuppa and the rising sun over the Okavango River; the dramatic setting of the Zambezi sun is intensified by solitude and silence.

ukuzime tu lapele. Alfred Nyazo Tunapu scanned the bush and then stopped.

'What did he say?' I whispered. Dan Stephens grabbed the hat off my head and pressed it to my chest. 'We have to pray.'

'Tukuzime tu lapele.'

Needles of sweat burst from my armpits, as is to be

expected when you're walking in the wild and a game guard with more than 25 years' experience gives the order to pray in mbukushu (the language spoken by many people living along the Okavango River). My organs clenched. The silence cut into my ears. I could taste the mid-afternoon heat. Photographer and fellow adventurer Melanie Van Zyl turned to me, thrilled, 'Well, you said you wanted adventure.' And I did.

It was my fourth day in one of the wildest regions in the world. I was here to explore the relationship between

Namibia's wildlife and the people who live among it and, hopefully, fulfil a lifelong dream of getting up close to my favourite animals – elephants. I'd only been to Kruger for the first time a year ago, and that was in a car. For a long time, camping was to me what a township tour is to a tourist, or sheltered South African. I was an outsider, looking in, armed with preconceived notions and a hint of resistance. In less than a week I had leapfrogged from bush virgin to extreme adventurer, forging deep into the bush with Alfred and Dan, guide and owner of Mavunje Camp and Mashi River Safaris, on the banks of the Kwando River.

Alfred – an old man with a small but muscular frame and unfurrowed skin that belied his age – told us about the indigenous visionary, Chief Mayuni of the Mafwe tribe. In 1990, he started educating people about how conservation could help with hunger and poverty and today he is the



chairman of the seven conservancies in the region. 'Rupara was the first conservancy and Mashi is the last-born,' Alfred said. Both Alfred and his brother were there from the beginning. Hunting in Mashi was introduced in 2003, and each conservancy has its own hunter who hunts for mostly international buyers. The money received from the buyer goes back into the conservancy to which the hunter belongs and the meat is shared with the community.

Alfred stopped and squinted. 'He's got a really good ear for the elephants,' Dan whispered. Slowly, we turned and moved in the opposite direction of the wind so the elephant couldn't catch a whiff of us. We walked on. An hour or more had passed. Alfred picked up some elephant dung and told us about its various uses – as a mosquito repellent and, when mixed with chillies and burnt, as protection for maize crops from elephant invasions. Seriousness washed over Alfred's face. 'Keep completely still,'

'In less than a week I had leapfrogged from bush virgin to extreme adventurer, forging deep into the bush'

he whispered. There they were: about 30 drinking at a watering hole some 400 metres away. More and more lumbered behind them. A loud trumpeting reverberated through the air, and thrummed in the boots Dan had leant me, and in my heart. It was a profoundly moving experience. Wild.


And that wasn't even the first elephant I'd seen on this trip. Two nights earlier we'd experienced them in a different way: by car. On the way to Nambwa Lodge, a community-based enterprise within the Bwabwata National Park (created from Caprivi Game Park and

Mahango Game Reserve), we took a detour to do some exploring before checking in. The park is majestic and peaceful and the views embrace the horizon. As we drove in, I spotted a huge matriarch behind one of the trees in the forest-like bush, a herd trailing behind her.

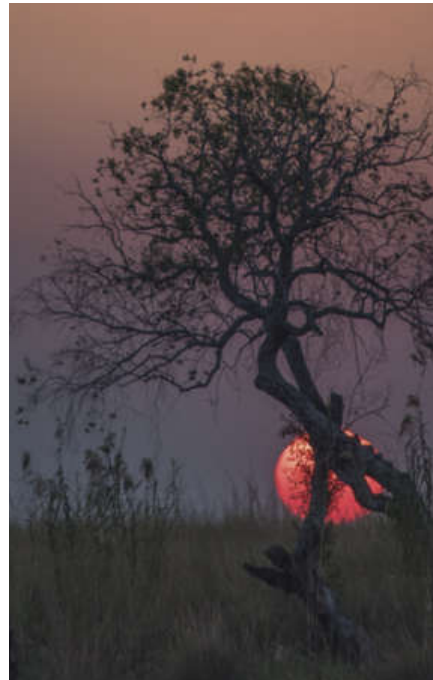
'Look Mel!' I said. We drove slowly ... and there was another, and then some more. I felt a deep peace in the wind. Silence. Later, at sunset, we drove to Horseshoe Lagoon, the perennial oxbow lake on the Kwando River five minutes from the lodge, and found even more of >

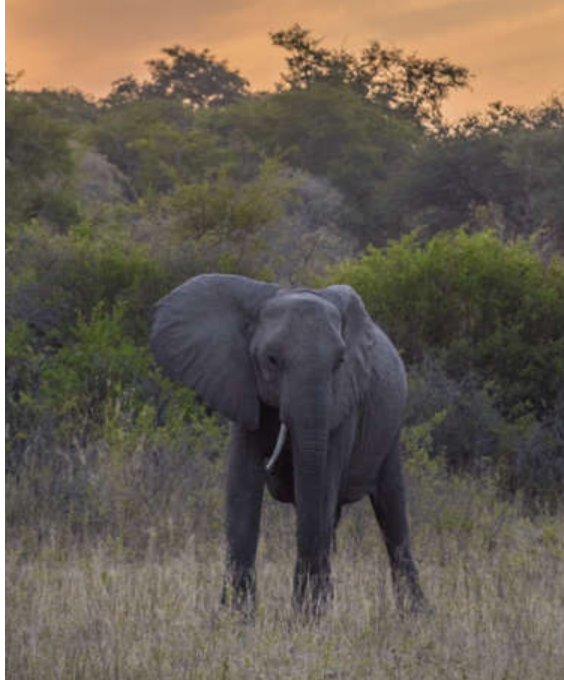
'Throughout this region, wild animals roam freely. They wander to neighbouring Angola, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. No fences. That's the charm'

We spotted this leopard lounging next to the river in the Chobe National Park while on a river excursion with the team from the Pangolin Voyager Houseboat.



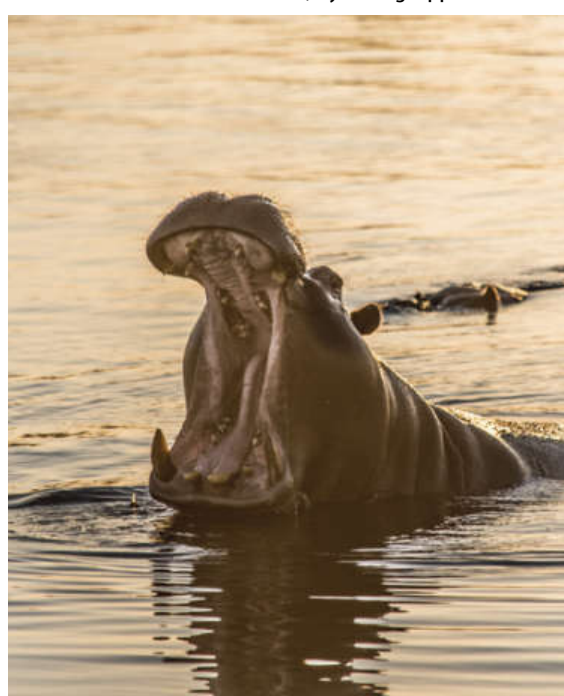
Visitors to the Namushasha Heritage Centre can get a feel of what traditional life is like in the Mashi community, as well as learning about agricultural practices and how to behave respectfully. Here, the traditional regalia worn by sangomas is displayed.





'After gaining independence in 1990, the Namibian government set about restoring the region'

TOP FROM LEFT A grey-headed kingfisher; Alfred Nyazo Tunapu, game guard at Mavunje Camp and Mashi River Safaris; looking into the water from a mokoro; another day, another elephant. **MIDDLE FROM LEFT** Rupara Community Campsite; hippos cooling off as the sun dips down; sunset over the Kwando River on the way back to Mavunje Community Camp. **BELOW FROM LEFT** Sunrise on the Kavango River in Ngepi Camp, the view from our open-air treehouse; white-fronted bee-eaters flutter about the nests which are holes in the Linyanti River bank; a fisherman on the Chobe River; a yawning hippo.



these magnificent animals. By itself, an elephant is already stupefying. Put 30 or 40 drinking by a river in front of the dimming orange orb of sun – wow!

Then back at Nambwa Lodge, over a few G&Ts on the viewing deck, lodge manager Juan Marx came over and said, 'Let me show you something.' We walked along a raised wooden walkway towards the suites and there, a stone's throw away, was another big group walking towards us. One elephant stretched its trunk upwards, wrapping it around the camel-thorn and shaking it. Pods fell to the ground and the herd fed. Elephants have a grace and gentleness that's palpable. In just a few days I'd seen so many, in so many different ways. Now I got the feeling that nature was just showing off.

Throughout this region, wild animals roam freely. They wander to neighbouring Angola, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. No fences. That's the charm. It wasn't always like this though. Game populations in the Zambezi panhandle were once pillaged in combat during the war for independence.

Killing for meat was a necessity. Giraffe and black rhino became extinct locally.

Kenyan Nobel Peace Prize winner and environmental activist Wangari Maathai once said: 'In a few decades, the relationship between the environment, resources and conflict may seem almost as obvious as the connection we see today between human rights, democracy and peace.' This philosophy is evident here, where community-driven conservation initiatives are fostering democracy, sustainability and human dignity.

After gaining independence in 1990, the Namibian government set about restoring the region with a Conservancy Development Support Grant Fund. Unlike other parks around the world, Namibia's method is inclusive and the government is the first in the world to incorporate environmental protection into its constitution. It directs a share of funds generated from tourism to formerly disadvantaged Namibians (and official members of communal conservancies) while also boosting the numbers of species with low populations, increasing biodiversity and rehabilitating wildlife. This collaborative effort has reinstated populations of lions, zebras, cheetahs and other native wildlife. Today, there are seven conservancies in the region and much like it was many, many years ago, the communities of the Zambezi Region co-exist with the wildlife around them.

As I saw more of the region, the more I understood. People here are knowledgeable about history and nature. I learnt how the Linyanti River was formed but I also learnt about cultural practices – another point of pride for the people of the region.

Our last stop was the Pangolin Voyager Houseboat on the Chobe and Zambezi rivers. A speedboat from here took us on excursions and sunset rides. The Chobe River has about 10000 elephants and is overpopulated with crocodile. Elephants constantly surrounded me – babies and huge adults, crossing the water metres from me, the big ones helping the infants. On a trip with Pangolin Photo Safaris we watched in awe as a leopard strolled along the water's edge and then lay in the sand, contemplating whatever leopards do.

On these trips, I watched boat upon boat filled with tourists >



'Elephants constantly surrounded me – babies and huge adults, crossing the water metres from me, the big ones helping the infants'

race to this nook for pictures of elephants and to that cranny for a photo of a fish eagle. I felt sorry for the animals. The energy of excited camera-toting tourists in big numbers must affect them.

It was on these waters in the more popular eastern section that it hit me how truly special, untamed and private the

PLAN YOUR TRIP →

GETTING THERE

We drove a Toyota Hilux 4x4, rented from Bushtrackers, from Joburg through the Stockpoort border post to Botswana (about R235 per vehicle to enter) and into Namibia through the Moembo border post (about R300). In the wet season many roads are inaccessible so a 4x4 is needed but a high-clearance vehicle will get you by in the dry season. Rentals are fitted with all-terrain tyres, off-road nudge bars, long-range fuel tanks and a dual battery system and are available from Joburg, Windhoek or Kasane (subject to a delivery or return fee). From R950 per day. bushtrackers.com

NEED TO KNOW

R1 equals N\$1, but rands are widely accepted. South Africans don't need a visa. There is fuel at Divundu, Kongola, Katima Mulilo and Rundu. ATMs are

sparse so carry enough cash for emergencies.

WHEN TO GO

The dry season, June to November, is the best time to go.

WHAT TO WEAR

Veldskoene are best for walking through the region. From R500 at Mint Clothing. 021-975-9335

STAY HERE

Ngepi Camp is on an island in the Okavango Delta near the Bwabwata National Park. It's both serene and funky and you'll wish you had booked more than one night. We stayed in the en-suite solar-powered tree house at the river's brink. B&B from R790 pp. Camping is from R120 pp. ngepicamp.com
Livingstone's Camp sites are quite large with a big kitchen area. Bring your own toilet paper, though. Site 3 has

a good view. From R285 pp. livingstonescamp.com

Rupara Community Campsite

is one of the few community-run camps. Some sites overlook the water and others are encased in bush. The loos have a view and there's a donkey boiler for hot water. R80 pp. +264-81-553-4616

Nambwa Tented Lodge has well-appointed African-chic rooms, a tented campsite and a boma restaurant with views of the Kwando River. Expect sweet surprises in your room. It's the only lodge in the area where night drives are permitted. From R6 106 pp (all inclusive). Camping is R170, kids half price. nambwalodge.com

Mavunje Camp lies on a lagoon and there are quirky details such as fairy lights in the bathrooms. It's run in conjunction with the Mashi Conservancy. There are three campsites each with a

separate bathroom and toilet, a dining area looking onto the river, and a fully equipped kitchen, with views of the floodplains. The focus is on private walking and river-based safaris. From R160 pp. A self-catering tented camp is also available from R320 pp. mashiriversafaris.com

The Pangolin Voyager

Houseboat on the Namibian side, is a floating lodge on the Chobe and Zambezi River. I found the decor a bit outdated and I banged my head on the chunky painting on the headboard. But it was the perfect way to experience 'a day in the life' of the wildlife on the Chobe River. From R3 000 pp (all inclusive). pangolinphoto.com

DO THIS

Take a game drive in Nkasa Rupara National Park, organised through Nkasa



LEFT TO RIGHT An elephant cools off in the river; Nambwa Tented Lodge is beautifully decorated in chic earth tones; looking for game on the banks of the Chobe River. The Pangolin Voyager Houseboat has two vessels to use for game-spotting, fishing or visiting Impalila Island.

WIN

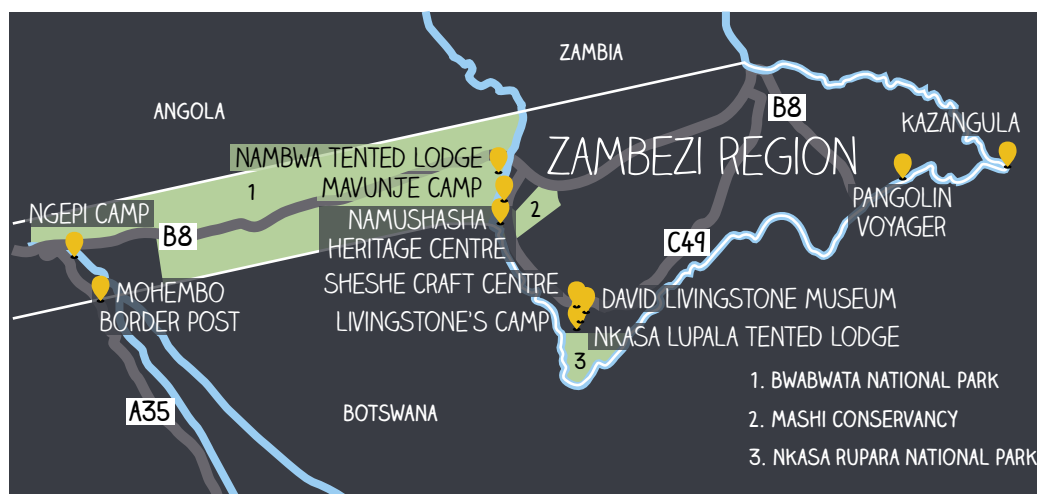
A PAIR OF VELLIES

There are 10 pairs of unisex Freestyle Handcrafted veldskoene, valued from R500 from Mint Clothing Cape Town, up for grabs. To enter, tag @GetawayMagazine with a picture of your most epic adventure (where you should have worn vellis) to our Twitter or Instagram accounts, with the hashtag #travellingveldskoene. The competition is open to SA residents only. Entries close 31 October 2015. For T&Cs visit getaway.co.za/competition

Zambezi region I'd just been in is: desolate, rough and barely anyone around. It's the ultimate destination for wild adventure, culture and the conservation-minded. I thought about everything I'd seen. The way Namibia fiercely protects its wildlife and works at enhancing and protecting the livelihood of the people living in these

areas reminded me of that elephant I'd seen at Nambwa. The one that shook the tree so all could eat. The co-habitation of animals and humans can be a benefit to all and here, in one of the wildest regions on Earth, not only is it working, it's paramount to all species' survival – and that's recognised. **6**

Lupala Tented Lodge. It's a joint venture between the Italian Micheletti family and Wuparo Community Conservancy. From R400. nkasalupalalodge.com
Visit the Namushasha Heritage Centre at Kongola, a museum of the history and traditions of the Lozi and Kololo tribes, showcasing the way disputes within the community are handled by the *ndunas* (elders), how livestock is kept, to instruments played. Entrance is R80 pp. gondwana-collection.com
David Livingstone Museum in Mamili (Nkasa Lupala) National Park tells the story of Dr Livingstone and the history of the local tribes. Arrange a visit through Livingstone's Camp. Free. livingstonescamp.com
Do a walking trail in the Mashi Conservancy and get up close and personal with elephant (naturally), leopard and giraffe. R300 pp. mashiriversafaris.com



Take a mokoro trip on the Linyanti River at Livingstone's Camp. Our trip was somewhat saddening – the water was low due to the drought, and you could almost see (and feel) the earth below. The best time is sunrise and sunset. R250 pp. livingstonescamp.com
Go on a photo safari with

Pangolin Photo Safaris. It's an intimate way to experience the wildlife, and you learn lots of photography tricks. R1 450 pp for three hours (8GB SD card included, plus refreshments). pangolinphoto.com

SHOP HERE
Sheshe Craft Centre in

Sangwali village sells well-priced crafts, including wooden bowls and carvings by residents of Wuparo and the neighbouring Dzoti Conservancy. It's just north of the entrance into Nkasa Rupara National Park. mashicrafts.com

*Prices and conversions correct at time of going to print

LISTEN UP, ADVENTURE FREAKS

*Here are five trails
on our untamed, rugged
Wild Coast that will
have you feeling like
a fresh-air junkie.
By Jacques Marais*





Jacques Marais tackles the Sugar Loaf Lookout Trail from Umngazi along the coast towards Port St Johns.

I'm the man,' I silently congratulate myself as I grind up my umpteenth sandy ridge of the morning, with sweat pouring off my brow. Calves cramping and heart hammering, I slack off as I reach the dramatic summit on the edge of a steep coastal cliff, with the Indian Ocean sprawling in all its wild abandon to my right.

'I've beaten Max to the top, and that's a first,' I mutter gleefully to myself, and look back along the Wild Coast shoreline to see what might be holding up my riding buddy ... just in time to see him projectile-vomiting over the handlebars of his stationary mountain bike.

It turns out that I have not miraculously transformed into a mountain biking (MTB) superhero, but rather that Max has contracted tick-bite fever. This is a bummer, especially if you're part-way along an inaccessible Imana Wild Ride route recce, and nowhere remotely near a road.

When in doubt on a bike ride, revert to that age-old MTB maxim: 'Find a pub, or in this case, a shebeen.' Truth be told, that is probably more my apophthegm than a general point of view, but Max was getting dehydrated as hell and needed some kind of kicker to keep him going.

Fortunately shebeens are a dime a dozen along the Wild Coast and pretty soon I had a couple of ice-cold Stoney Ginger Beers to rekindle an ever so slight spark in my riding buddy.

For the next hour or two, we pedalled along the glorious trail on to Mdumbi Point, where I left him in the lap of luxury at this brilliant little backpackers lodge.

My ride continued for another two days, and I revelled in the never-ending natural glory of the diverse range of biomes stretching along the remaining 280 kilometres unfolding from the Kei to the Umtamvuna River. >

This was my first up-close experience of the old Transkei, and let me tell you one thing, they don't call this stretch of coastline the Wild Coast for nothing.

This is the heartland of the amaXhosa people, and the landscape is filled with inland rolling hills, plunging coastal cliffs and shark-infested river estuaries. And if the ticks or raggies don't get you, chances are a rogue *Canis Africanis* will explode from a seemingly serene rural village to leave its teeth marks on your calves.

But you know what? It will be worthwhile in the end, as there is no region quite like the Wild Coast in South Africa.

Tidal estuaries, fringed by the planet's southernmost mangroves, offer a safe haven to breeding schools of stumpnose, kob and grunter, while whales, dolphins and even orcas cruise the Big Blue.

Surprisingly, the natural habitat remains relatively unspoilt in many areas, with a good 320-plus species of birds, numerous mammals and a range of rare butterflies. Freshwater rivers, diverse intertidal zones, pristine beaches and montane woodland combine here within an ecological treasure trove, with a refreshing lack of mainstream tourism trappings.

All in all, the Wild Coast is sure to leave you breathless, both on and off the bike.

And as far as I'm concerned, the best way to experience the natural beauty is to venture onto one of the many trails traversing this part of the Rainbow Nation.

You can hike, bike, trail run, paddle or even drive. There are hundreds of routes – both guided or unguided – to choose from. Whether you do it solo, in a group or as part of an event is up to you, too, so read on and plan your adventure!



Navigating the back roads of the old Transkei by bike makes for an excellent adventure. **OPPOSITE, FROM LEFT** The beach near Morgan Bay is just one of many accessible family walks and runs in the area; long-horned zebu cattle are a given along any Transkei trail.

1

ON YOUR BIKE

Route Kei Mouth to Trennerys Hotel (and beyond)

Jump-start your ride with a ferry trip across the Great Kei River, immediately cranking into a steep gravel ascent. Look out for a Jeep track to your left once you reach the top, then take in the view before missioning down to the beach and across the Gxara River (you could also stick to the main gravel road).

Pedal along this beautiful beach (go when it's low tide) for almost two kilometres until you turn left on another Jeep track heading inland. Continue past some huts, then keep right at the fork and right again when you hit the tar road down to Qolora Mouth. A pub lunch awaits you at Trennerys Hotel to fortify you for the return route. trennerys.co.za

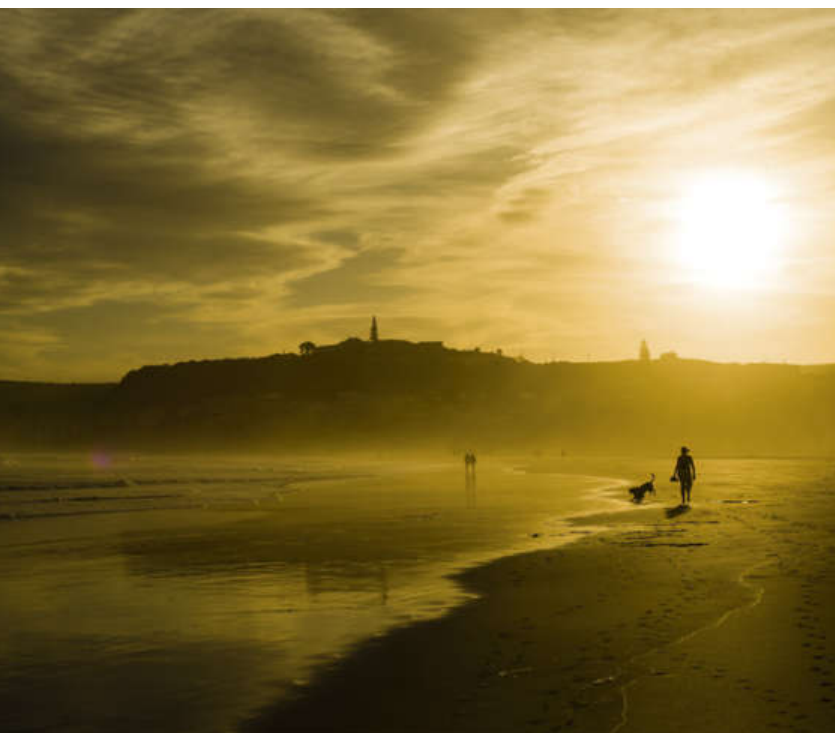
HERE'S A PLAN

Keen on more than just a day ride? Active Escapes will tailor a trip for you around either their Pondo Pedal or Lower Wild Coast Cycle Adventure. And if an event is your thing, nothing can beat the annual Imana Wild Ride with Glen Haw and his crew. active-escapes.co.za, imanawildride.co.za

CAMP HERE

Yellowwood Forest Camp Site on the banks of the Inchara River (between Kei Mouth and Morgan Bay) is a stunning camp ground set amid towering trees and with 30 level sites. From R110 per day and R15 pp (maximum six people). yellowwoodforest.co.za

'You can hike, bike, trail run, paddle or even drive. There are hundreds of routes – both guided or unguided – to choose from'



2

ON YOUR FEET

Route Morgan Bay to Haga Haga
(or all the way to Gonubie)

Writing this, I got a faraway look in my eyes thinking about Morgan Bay. This picturesque seaside village is one of my favourite family getaways, with fabulous hiking options both up and down the coast. For a quick hour or two of breathtaking views and clifftop wandering, the three-kilometre route west towards Double Mouth Nature Reserve is truly untouchable.

Turn this into a full day of coastal exploration by continuing to Haga Haga for a return hike of about 28 kilometres. The route combines most of Days 1 and 2 of the Strandloper Trail, and for the full experience, you could continue for three more nights all the way to Gonubie.

HERE'S A PLAN

More information on how to book the Strandloper Trail is available online, or you can check out Active Escapes or Wild Coast Hikes to plan a more personalised itinerary for anything up to 10 days. strandlopertrails.org.za, active-escapes.co.za, wildcoasthikes.com

CAMP HERE

Double Mouth Campsite, in Double Mouth Nature Reserve which protects a pristine estuary, is as pretty a campsite as one could wish for. From R212 per site (maximum six people). 043-705-4400 At Haga Haga, try the recently opened Miarestate for a pamper-yourself option. From R1995 pp sharing, meals included. miarestate.co.za

3

ON THE TRAIL

Route Umngazi to Sugar Loaf lookout point

You will find any number of free-ranging trail runs along the Wild Coast, but few can match Umngazi when it comes to the metre-per-metre wow factor. Head out of the main gate and turn right off the entrance road on to a dippy cattle footpath which runs along the coastal cliffs. Chances are you will face off against a passing parade of inquisitive Xhosa herders and long-horned Nguni cattle, but that is part of the fun. The route is not long (the return is about 10 kilometres, depending on the trail you choose), but the steep ascents and breathtaking views will leave you, you've guessed it, pretty much breathless.

HERE'S A PLAN

The annual Transkei Superbowl is a new run on the trail calendar, encompassing two days of the most scenic views Pondoland has to offer. Find out about a number of other events or guided runs from Active Escapes. transkeisuperbowl.com, active-escapes.co.za

CAMP HERE

The gorgeous Umngazi River Bungalows and Spa does not offer camping but there is The Pont campsite just outside Port St Johns, which is both safe and unpretentious. Call Jenny on 047-564-1324. R80 pp. If you'd prefer a real bed, Umngazi's prices start at R965 pp, all meals included. umngazi.co.za



ABOVE Pitch your tent at Bulungula's little gem of a hideaway campsite. **BELOW** The canoe adventure along the Xhora River is perfect for beginner paddlers. **OPPOSITE** You will definitely need a 4x4 in order to explore the muddy tracks of the Wild Coast interior.



4

ON THE WATER

Route Up and down the Xhora River

Bulungula is about as off the beaten track as one gets on the Wild Coast, with a proper gravel trek along juddery roads to get you there. To get to the Xhora River, you need to take your paddles and life jackets and huff and puff over the ridge to the river. The canoes are old-school and a bit raggedy around the edges, but the scenery itself is sublime. Paddle up the river first to a section of indigenous riverine forest, then follow the mangrove swamps all the way back to the mouth.

HERE'S A PLAN

All guided activities at Bulungula are run by the community, with 100 per cent of the fees going to the guides. Book at reception at the eco-lodge itself. There's also a six-kilometre (one-way) Strandloper Canoe Trail on the Mngazana River, where you can overnight in a 12-sleeper hut. strandlopertrails.org.za

CAMP HERE

Bulungula Lodge offers self-catering huts and permanent canvas tents, as well as a couple of hideaway campsites among milkwood trees. From R90 pp. bulungula.com



5

ON THE ROAD

Route Any gnarly gravel road

The Wild Coast brims with challenging off-road adventures, but before you set off in your 4x4, keep in mind that much of the area is either operated as tribal land or conservancies, and it is therefore imperative to have a permit when venturing off public roads. The local guides from Bulungula will be more than happy to lead you along the very rugged track via Mpame Forest to Coffee Bay by prior arrangement, though. Beaches are off-limits to 4x4s due to their very delicate ecosystems.

HERE'S A PLAN

More organised 4x4 excursions can be arranged through a number of adventure organisers, and Peter Kruger from Mazeppa Bay knows the region like the back of his hand. Call him on 082-651-2005.

CAMP HERE

Camping options at Bulungula have been mentioned, but there is also the Mazeppa Bay Hotel, with both full board or self-catering. From R370 pp sharing. mazeppabay.co.za

'Bulungula is about as off the beaten track as one gets on the Wild Coast, with a proper gravel trek along juddery roads to get you there'



DE HOOP IS A BIRDER'S PARADISE

These are just some of the 270 birds you can spot at De Hoop Nature Reserve:

- Rufous-chested sparrowhawk
- Eurasian golden oriole
- Greater flamingo
- Shy albatross
- Great white pelican
- Verreaux's eagle
- European oystercatcher
- Whiskered tern
- Hartlaub's gull
- African grass owl
- Fiery-necked nightjar
- European bee-eater
- Amethyst sunbird
- Cinnamon-breasted bunting



Eland, the world's second largest antelope, enjoy a variety of habitats in the 35 546-hectare reserve.

OPPOSITE A Cape weaver, one of the more common sightings in the Cape's top bird hotel.

De Hoop *springs eternal*

We all have special places to which we return over again. Pippa de Bruyn's is De Hoop Nature Reserve, which has developed and expanded in tandem with her own life.

Photographs by Teagan Cunliffe





ABOVE The endangered bontebok cantering amid succulents. This rare antelope is almost always seen from the circular drive approaching the vlei and cottages, along with zebra, eland, baboons and ostriches.

It haunts me now that I can't recall who first took me to De Hoop. I know I was just out of varsity, still long-haired, stealing surreptitious glances at a boy who didn't love me. I wasn't much into nature then, more focused on the music blaring through car speakers, nodding 'yeah' whenever Jim Morrison drawled that he was going to get his kicks before the whole shithouse went up in flames. And we were going up in flames all right – this was the late 80s – but the

shithouse seemed far from the broad expanse of water rippling with birdlife below our tented encampment. Egrets, herons, coots, cormorants, ibis, plovers – more species than my limited vocabulary. And then came the pelicans. I felt awe as I watched them crash-land into the water before coming up, bills laden with fish, while above swifts put on a spectacular display. That night I slept in my car – cursing the poxy bint in the boy's tent – and was woken in the dewy predawn by the rip and scrunch of zebra grazing around us, like some *Out of Africa* fantasy.

Quite a few years passed before I next signed the register at the De Hoop gate, a new bunch of reprobates in tow. Now 26, tresses shorn. This time we rented two cottages – basic little units strung along in a row like wallflowers at a dance, each with a large round stone firepit under a stumpy tree. At night we made bonfires and drank cheap red wine under the star-spangled sky. The artist I arrived with was never going to be a long-term thing, but it was ending sooner than I wanted. I watched him flirt with his new handler, a fresh-faced architect. When he left the fire to replenish our glasses I said 'look after him'. 'I will,' she said, and we stared into the flames. The next day, driving to De Hoop

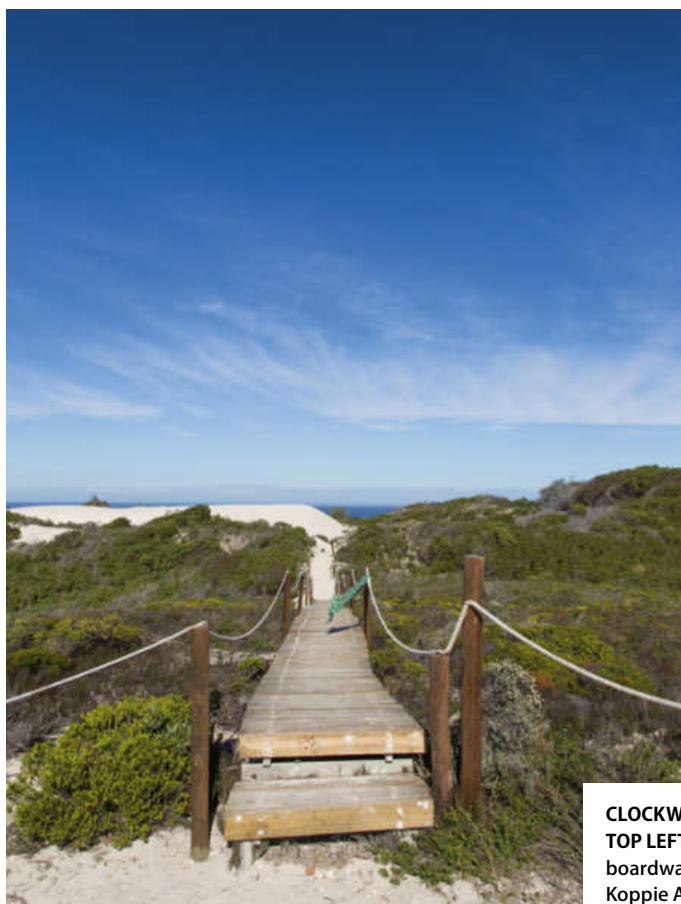
beach, the tapestry of lime and olive greens blurring into silver, I wound my window wide open, letting the scent of hot geranium and baked soil wash over me, content.

April 1995. Only one year later and I'm again careering down the dusty ribbon that winds its way to De Hoop, stones spewing in the Citi Golf's wake. The foreigner behind the wheel is the man I want to marry, and De Hoop is part of my courtship plan. A Wiltshire farmer's son, met in London, he knows little about the country of my birth. I have only 10 nights, and De Hoop is where we will spend two – one, if we don't make it before the reserve gates are locked.

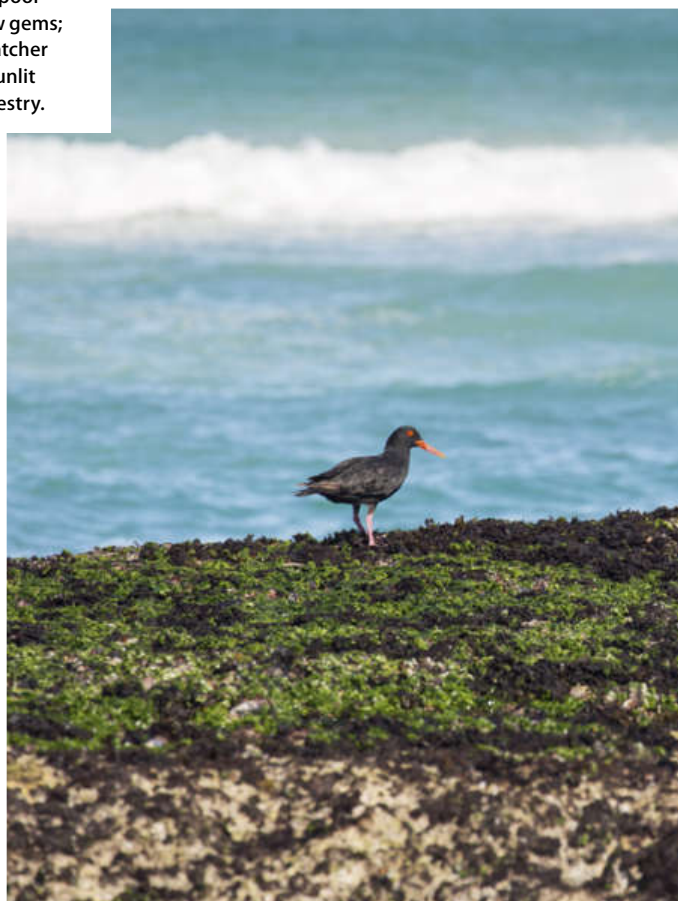
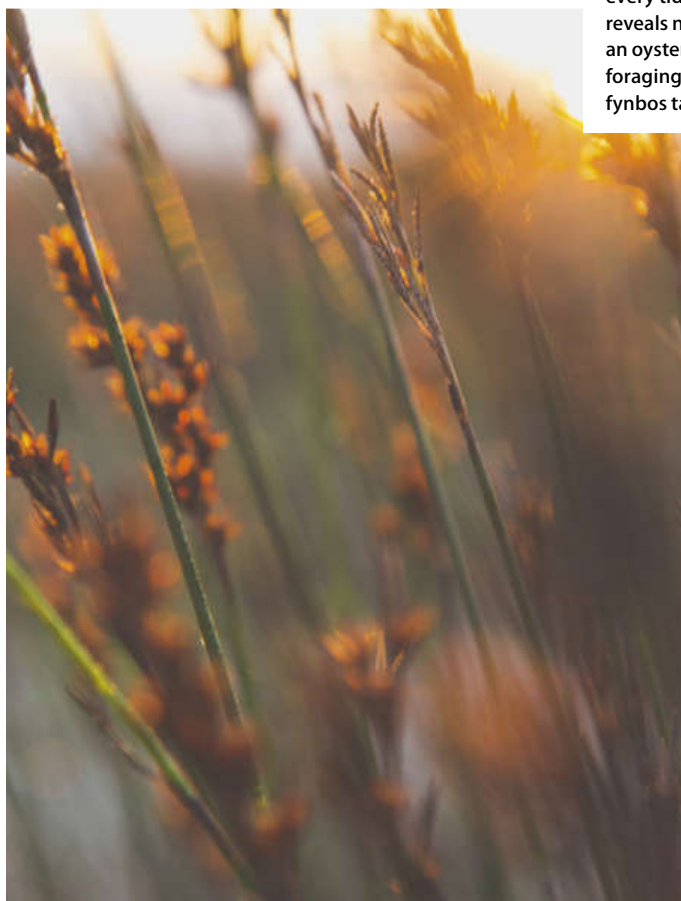
We make it with minutes to spare. Elated by our rally charge to the finish, we carry our groceries into Grysbok cottage, only to discover we need cutlery, crockery, cooking equipment, bedding. We make do, thanks to the kindness of the reserve manager's wife who drops off a couple of blankets and rudimentary utensils, shaking her head with a smile. The next day we spend exploring the beach coves: like children in an Enid Blyton novel, we clamber into a sandy nook embraced by curved walls carved and pockmarked by the sea. There were alcoves into which you could place candles, or madonnas, if you were that way inclined. A beautiful sunny mid-week day; not a soul in sight. Lying naked, cocooned amidst the limestone walls, his heartbeat in time with mine, I knew De Hoop had played its part.

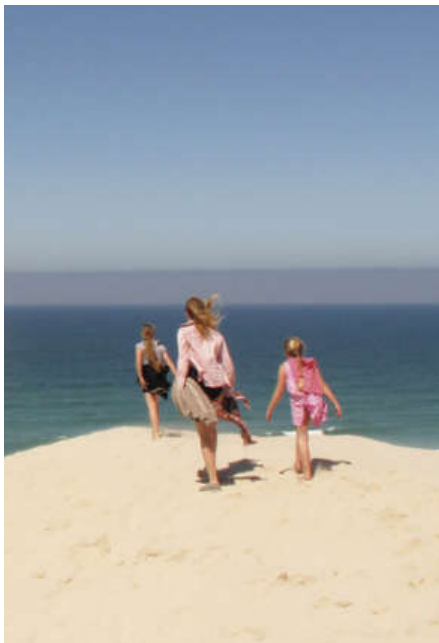
Six months later we are back, this time with our best man and his girlfriend. We trudge up to the highest point of the huge white sand dunes overlooking Koppie Alleen. Bathed in sun, the empty blue horizon before us, wind whipping our hair about, I am overwhelmed; on the cusp of a life I always dreamt of but never thought I deserved. With a spontaneous whoop, >

'The foreigner behind the wheel is the man I want to marry and De Hoop is part of the courtship plan'



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The boardwalk to the Koppie Alleen dunes; every tidal pool reveals new gems; an oystercatcher foraging; sunlit fynbos tapestry.





‘I leap at the chance to introduce our daughter, now two, to the sheltered coves and rock pools, to see zebras...’

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT
A heron fishes in the vleij, an internationally treasured Ramsar site; the author and her daughters in 2009; a myriad flowers whatever the season; views from Koppie Alleen of the world’s biggest whale nursery.



ABOVE Morukuru Ocean House is the most upscale offering, starting at just under R20 000 for four – and that’s in low season – but there are plenty more options at a fraction of that price, such as the Opstal Vlei Suite below.

our best man drops to roll down the dune, a twirling whirl of sand in his wake. We follow, laughing, digging the sand from our ears. Walking back along the raised boardwalk to our car I spot a gold-hued everlasting flower amid the ericas.

Feeling a little guilty, I pick one for my wedding bouquet – a plundered relic from the church that matters most to me.

Work, birth of baby girl, work, travel, work. We take our opportunities where we find them. After a heady shared sojourn in Holland Park, there is talk of moving to London. I return, ready to pack up, when a girlfriend suggests a trip to De Hoop. I leap at the chance to introduce our daughter, now two, to the sheltered coves and rock pools, to see zebras, bontebok and eland grazing on the sweet grasses near the circular drive. But once there, excitement makes way for nausea. I am unable to eat; unwilling to drink. Astride an old tree stump, I suddenly know. It is our second daughter, making her presence felt, and Africa is where we’ll want to raise her.

The next time we return it is with my in-laws, flown south to meet their new grandchild. We are booked into one of the new cottages overlooking the vlei; built by CapeNature in an attempt to woo more travellers to their unsung Ramsar gem, bedding is now supplied, the kitchen equipped. It is the first time we have lived together on neutral territory, sharing the cosy intimacy of



ABOVE The Opstal Vlei Suite has large barn doors opening onto the lawns with distant vlei views.

meeting over an unfamiliar kettle in our dressing gowns.

Seated on Koppie Alleen, we count the whales – many of them shadowed by calves – the world’s biggest whale nursery. En route back to the vlei we stop to watch baby baboons gambolling on the park-like grounds. While my husband makes a fire, our eldest clammers onto her granny’s lap. Watching her relax into her grandmother’s embrace, I wonder at the courage of mothers, the wrenching separation of lives lived on separate continents.

2004. Our third elections come and go; De Hoop is listed a World Heritage Site. A public-private partnership is on the cards, and a few years later the De Hoop Collection is launched. A dear friend hires five three-bedroom cottages to celebrate her 48th birthday. We drag the sofas out to

make an impromptu living room around a firepit hidden amid the milkwoods. We eat like kings and drink like fish, and wake up together to do it again. It is the best birthday party. Ever.

The pace of life picks up. The girls turn into teenagers, with social calendars that don’t involve us. The next time I am pinching myself with pleasure at the prospect of an entire weekend in De Hoop, I am in a tiny boat crossing the vlei with four journalists, on our way to Melkkamer, the original 1907 gabled sandstone farmhouse, and part of a swathe of land expropriated by the government in 1983. Beautifully restored, Melkkamer is now the top-end choice in the varied >



ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT One of the many improvements from De Hoop Collection is the introduction of locally trained guides; magic hour casts its spell; a highlight is a guided walk to study the intertidal creatures that inhabit the myriad rock pools.

accommodation options, and comes with its own staff, including Pinkey, the naturalist.

After taking us for a stroll along the muddy banks of the vlei, Pinkey herds us into a safari vehicle and trundles us seawards to study the intertidal creatures inhabiting the myriad rock pools that line this coast. Pointing and picking, she provides a lively run-down: De Hoop has 18 limpet species, the most in the world; oystercatchers mate for life; did we know the barnacle has the longest penis for its size?

When we return to the broad veranda of our gabled homestead, we sit like old friends staring out at the vlei view. Later that night, now seated around a large bonfire, we toss our heads back and howl at the Milky Way, our voices mingling to create a single note that rises like smoke to the heavens.

January 2015. 'I could get used to this.' My mom helps herself to the platter offered by one butler; the other replenishes my glass. They have set up our chairs in the lee of the wind; tucked between the dunes under a pink-tinged sky. Nearby I can hear my youngest, now 13, laughing as she tries sandboarding.

When Morukuru Family asked if I would like to experience its new De Hoop Ocean House, I leapt at the chance and couldn't resist asking if the invitation could be extended to include my mother. Not only because the experience it offers is exceptional – a chance to live like a billionaire in an exclusive-use villa – but I am shocked to learn that my mother has never visited De Hoop Nature Reserve.

‘[This] vlei is considered the best bird hotel in Southern Africa’

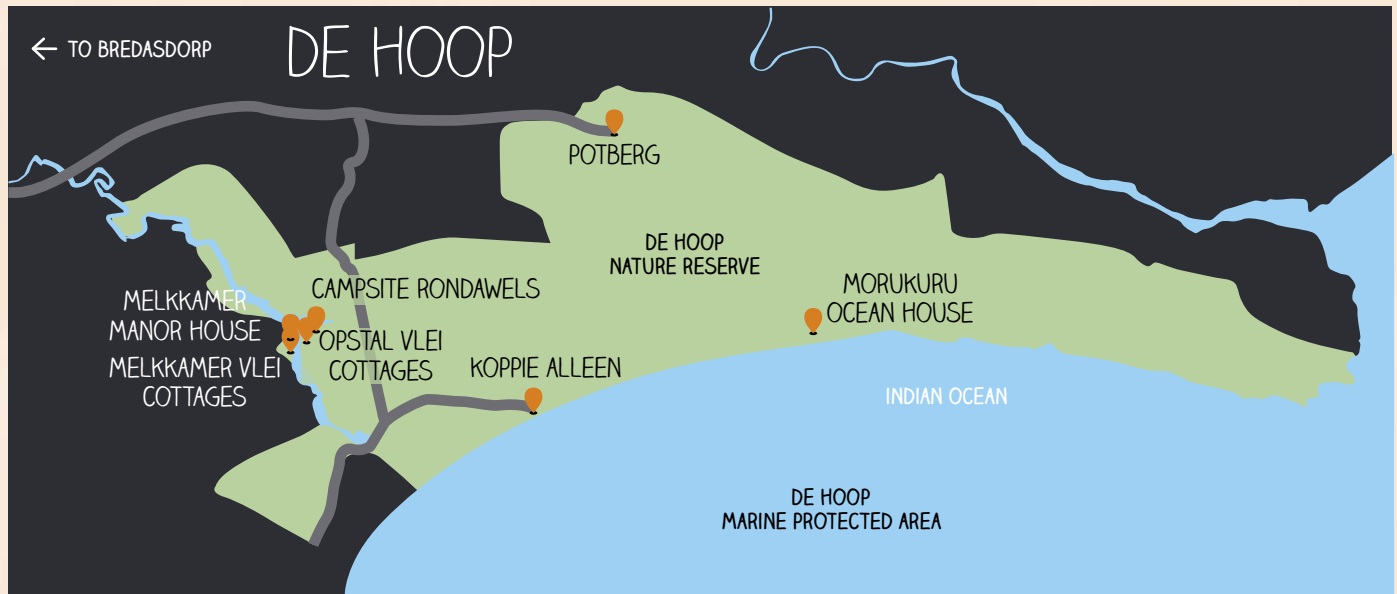
‘Do I need to pack food?’ she had called to ask before we set off from our respective homes. ‘No,’ I answered, but said no more, wanting to surprise her. The house – reputed to have cost R30 million, with impeccable green credentials – exceeds expectations. I had been worried about bedroom allocation but the design is democratic: every bedroom enjoys the same magnificent view. We wander around half-dazed; three

generations limpid with joy.

I lie down to read the obligatory welcome letter, left on our king-size bed. It's a Kahlil Gibran quote: ‘The most beautiful thing in life is that our souls remain hovering over the places where we once enjoyed ourselves.’ I put it down, study my surrounds. We – me, the reserve – have come a long way in the 20 years since Tom and I slept on twin beds pushed together under borrowed sheets in Grysbok cottage. But the real luxury – priceless, unquantifiable – is the same: surrounded by 35 546 hectares carpeted in coastal fynbos, a vlei that is considered the best bird hotel in Southern Africa, and a whale nursery painted in a palette to rival that of East Africa, the fine white sands flattening below the surf to create a gem-like strip of aquamarine.

On our last evening Tom and I walk down to the beach in front of the house. Low tide has revealed a sandy plunge pool beside a semi-circle of rock. With familiar intimacy we don't exchange a word, just strip down and sink into the womb-warm waters. The tanned leonine face of the man I love grinning at me, the sound of the surf pounding beyond the intertidal holes. Home. De Hoop, the hope, fulfilled. **📍**

PLAN YOUR TRIP →



GETTING THERE

De Hoop Nature Reserve is a three-hour drive from Cape Town. You can find route instructions on capenature.co.za/reserves/de-hoop-nature-reserve

WHEN TO GO

I've been there most months of the year, and it's always good. Spring for the flowers, summer for swimming, winter for whales. Perhaps the worst time is peak season, when daytrippers – sometimes by the busload – ruin the privacy and seclusion I love. But with 36 000 hectares and 70 kilometres of coastline, it's always possible to escape.

DO THIS

Be sure to book a guided tour of the intertidal zone, and a quad bike ride through the fynbos.

NEED TO KNOW

With the exception of Morukuru Ocean House, the beach is not in walking distance from the reserve's accommodation.

STAY HERE

The De Hoop Collection offers a great choice: from B&B en-suite rooms and rondavels with shared ablutions, to widely differing two-, three- and four-bedroom cottages. Of the self-catering options, the two-bedroom Opstal Vlei Cottages and four-bedroom Melkkamer Vlei Cottage enjoy the best location. They're hugely popular, so book well in advance.

Campsite Rondawels are from R910 for two.

Opstal Vlei Cottages, with two bedrooms, are from R2 250 (sleeps four).

Melkkamer Vlei Cottage, has four bedrooms and starts

from R3 000 (sleeps eight).

Melkkamer Manor House is from R9 600 (sleeps 8); DBB about R1 925 pp.

Morukuru Ocean House is the place to book if money is no object – it's the best exclusive-use villa experience I have had in Africa. It costs from R19 470 for four and R4 015 pp thereafter (sleeps up to 10); including meals, activities, a private vehicle, guide, chef and butler. dehoopcollection.co.za/morukuru.com

INSIDER'S TIP

If you're on a budget, the five Campsite Rondawels at the Opstal are a fantastic option, albeit very close together. Each rondavel is simply furnished with double/twin beds, bar fridge, toaster and kettle, and outdoor braai with unobstructed vlei views. Ablutions are shared but

the outdoor shower, encircled with a stone wall, is brilliant.

EAT AND DRINK

There is no shop, so stock up before you leave or in Bredasdorp, which has a decent Spar, or at one of the many farm stalls en route. There is a restaurant on site which serves good wholesome fare at a reasonable price.

WHAT TO PACK

It depends on the time of year, but for October, the usual beach stuff and a few warm layers. Board games, cards, books and a frisbee.

COSTS

Entrance to De Hoop for all is R40 pp and R20 for children under 12.

*Prices correct at time of going to print

OUR BUDGET DETAILED

Prices are per person, with hotels per person sharing

Flight	R8 329
Shangri-La (two nights)	R1,456
Hotel Puri (one night)	R263,50
Chaos Hotel (two nights)	R506
Petronas Towers	R272
Dim sum lunch (four plates)	R300
Massage	R1 243
Gallery entry	R45
The Majestic tea	R191
Taste Malaysia	R510
Birding tour	R2 165
Coliseum Café (meal and wine)	R300
Melaka (bus trip)	R160
Cocktails (two drinks)	R170
Last supper (three plates + wine)	R350
Total	R16 260,50



NO VISA
REQUIRED!

GOT MONEY BUT NO TIME?

GO TO KUALA LUMPUR FOR A QUICK, CHIC HOLIDAY

Fact: it is cheaper to fly from Joburg to KL and spend five nights in a five-star hotel than it is to fly to Cape Town and do the same. Asia addict Narina Exelby had R16 500 total to spend, and worked out this itinerary

Have a picnic
in this park

From 1998 until 2004 the Petronas Twin Towers were the tallest buildings in the world; in 2004 the Taipei 101 took that honour. The tallest building now is Dubai's Burj Khalifa. The 88-storey Petronas Twin Towers remain the world's highest twin buildings.

KUALA LUMPUR IS A WONDERFUL FUSION

of its multicultural roots: there are strong Islamic influences in much of the city's modern architecture and grand colonial buildings still stand. The animated personalities of Chinatown and Little India bring life to the big city, creating an urban environment that is as down to earth as it is evocative. And it has everything the urbanite craves: luxury brands, delicate art, fine dining and fast cars.

Yet at the heart of the chic glass-and-steel structures, beneath the towers of power and wealth, Kuala Lumpur is a city built on mud. Translated from Malay into English, 'kuala lumpur' means 'mud estuary', the name given to the confluence of the Gombak and Klang rivers in the 1860s by tin prospectors and miners. This estuary quickly became a boomtown, luring Indian and Chinese workers – and, of course, English colonialists – to what, more than a century later, became Malaysia's capital.

Whether Kuala Lumpur is your destination or a stopover, there are many ways to experience the spirit of this city. If you have five days and R16 500*, here's how to indulge in a stylish holiday and explore a different culture.

* Based on one person sharing accommodation

ITINERARY

DAY 1

Morning Visit the Petronas Twin Towers
Entrance R270 (RM84.80)

Kuala Lumpur's 452-metre-high steel-and-glass Petronas Twin Towers have drawn tourists since 1999. As well as snapping obligatory selfies out front, take a lift to the 170-metre-high Sky Bridge and walk between the towers, then head to the observation deck which, 360 metres above ground, has incredible views across the city. For a great ground view (and if you don't want a dim sum lunch as suggested below), buy picnic items from one of these stores in Suria KLCC Mall (at the base of the towers): Cold Storage supermarket; London Sandwich Co; for sweet treats Cake Sense and for fresh fruit juices Juice Works, then stretch out in the park below. petronastwintowers.com.my

Lunch Feast on dim sum

Dim sum plates From R51 (RM16)

Well-heeled locals know that the best place in the city for dim sum (steamed or fried dumplings) is Lai Po Heen, the



TOP Rhinoceros hornbill (*Buceros rhinoceros*) is just one of the fascinating birds you could spot at the Kuala Selangor Nature Park. **ABOVE** At Essa Spa at the Grand Hyatt, treatments are based on the Malaysian practice of ramuan, where healing plants are used in the process.

iStockphoto.com: Narina Exelby,
Getty Images/Gallo Images/
Thomas Marent

MELAKA
IS BEST SEEN
IN THE WEEK,
WHEN THERE
ARE FEWER
TOURISTS

RIGHT Little India in Melaka boasts a collection of fabric stores bursting with colours. **BELOW** Lai Po Heen at the Mandarin Oriental hotel is known to serve the best dim sum in the city.

BOTTOM The Kuala Lumpur City Centre Park adds some greenery to the steel-and-glass city.



Chinese restaurant at the Mandarin Oriental hotel. Dim sum is served here only at lunch so the restaurant fills quickly; we found eight plates more than we could finish between two of us. mandarinoriental.com/kualalumpur

Afternoon Pamper yourself Massage From R1 243 (RM390)

Ease into holiday mode with an hour-long massage at Essa Spa at the Grand Hyatt hotel. Healing massages have been part of Asian culture for thousands of years, and at Essa the treatments are based on the Malaysian practice of ramuan, where plants are selected and combined for their healthful effects.

kualalumpur.grand.hyatt.com

TIP Book a massage on a weekday between 10am and 1pm and get 30 per cent off.

Budget option The Thai massages offered at Erawan Spa, in Avenue K mall close to Petronas Twin Towers, are fantastic. From R185 (RM58).

erawanwellness.com

DAY 2

Morning Study Islamic art Entrance R45 (RM14)

Set a few hours aside to browse the exquisite Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, home to some of the world's best Islamic decorative arts. There is so much to see, from ceramics and fabrics to jewellery and glassware, all from around the Islamic world. iamm.org.my

Lunch Step into old Kuala Lumpur
Main course From R191 (RM60)
Patrons of Kuala Lumpur's iconic

colonial hotel, The Majestic, are greeted by doormen in neatly pressed safari suits. Inside, the hotel has retained its grand ambience and visitors can take afternoon tea in the Orchid Conservatory. majestickl.com

Evening Taste Malaysia Tour From R510 (RM160)

Food Tour Malaysia's passionate guides will give you a deeper appreciation of Malaysian culture and cuisine. You'll also feast at favourite local eateries that are completely off the tourist radar. foodtourmalaysia.com

DAY 3

All day Explore and shop

Kuala Lumpur is a shopaholic's delight. The six floors of Suria KLCC mall are a good option for luxury brands, as is Pavilion in the trendy Bukit Bintang district. Across the road Starhill Gallery is another luxury mall, with neighbouring Fahrenheit 88 hosting shops including Uniqlo, Rip Curl and New Balance. Malaysia's largest IT mall, Low Yat Plaza, is best for electronics. Chinatown and Little India districts offer fun market shopping experiences. suriaklcc.com.my, pavilion-kl.com, starhillgallery.com, fahrenheit88.com, plazalowyat.com

Or do this instead

All day Go birding Tour R2165 (RM680)

If shopping is not your thing, head to the Kuala Selangor Nature Park, 70 kilometres from Kuala Lumpur, where you'll have a chance to see silvery langurs, Brahminy kites, sea eagles, >





ABOVE FROM LEFT Batu Caves, with its 272 steps, is one of the most popular Hindu shrines outside India; Coliseum Café, once the finest eatery in Malaysia, opened in 1920 and has changed very little since then. **OPPOSITE** Barlai's signature cocktails include the Bacon Bourbon Bloody Mary – try it!

and, if you're lucky, a storm stork. Experience this mangrove reserve with Junglewalla, a company that offers truly exceptional nature tours, and you'll return with renewed appreciation for mangrove ecosystems and fireflies. junglewalla.com

Dinner Go back in time
Mains From R175 (RM55)

In its heyday Coliseum Café, which has a bar built to the average height of an English gentleman's elbow, was patronised by prime ministers, traders, government ministers and writers (Somerset Maugham is said to have enjoyed a few drinks here). Very little has changed since then: regulars have

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FOR WOMEN
TO DRESS
MODESTLY IN
MALAYSIA



vowed never to return if it did. The Coli's famous for its steaks but if you aren't hungry then order a gin and tonic in this 94-year-old establishment. coliseum1921.com

DAY 4

All day Explore Melaka

Taxi About R892 (RM280) one way

Bus R80 (RM25) one way

*Budget
option*

Room at the historic Hotel Puri

From R525 for two (RM165)

Spend the day (and night) in Melaka, two-and-a-half hours outside Kuala Lumpur. It's a town loved as much for its interesting streets and bold, colourful architecture as it is for its sense of history, intriguing cuisine and mix of cultures. Wander the streets of the old town (at No 8 Heeren Street Heritage Centre learn about the town's iconic shophouses), walk up to Bukit St Paul (where Jan van Riebeeck's wife, Maria, was buried) and enjoy Baba-Nyonya cuisine (a fusion of Chinese food and Malay spices, influenced by Portuguese-Eurasian styles of cooking) at Nancy's Kitchen. If you're there on a weekend, the Jonker Walk night market is an absolute must. hotelpuri.com

DAY 5

Morning Visit a Hindu temple

Admission Free

The 400-million-year-old Batu Caves, 15 kilometres north of Kuala Lumpur,



is the site of magnificent Hindu temples and shrines. A 43-metre-high gold statue of Lord Murugan stands at the base of the stairs and inside Cathedral Cave, where the arched ceiling is 100 metres high, there are several beautiful shrines. The other caves house exquisite paintings and statues of deities. tourism.gov.my

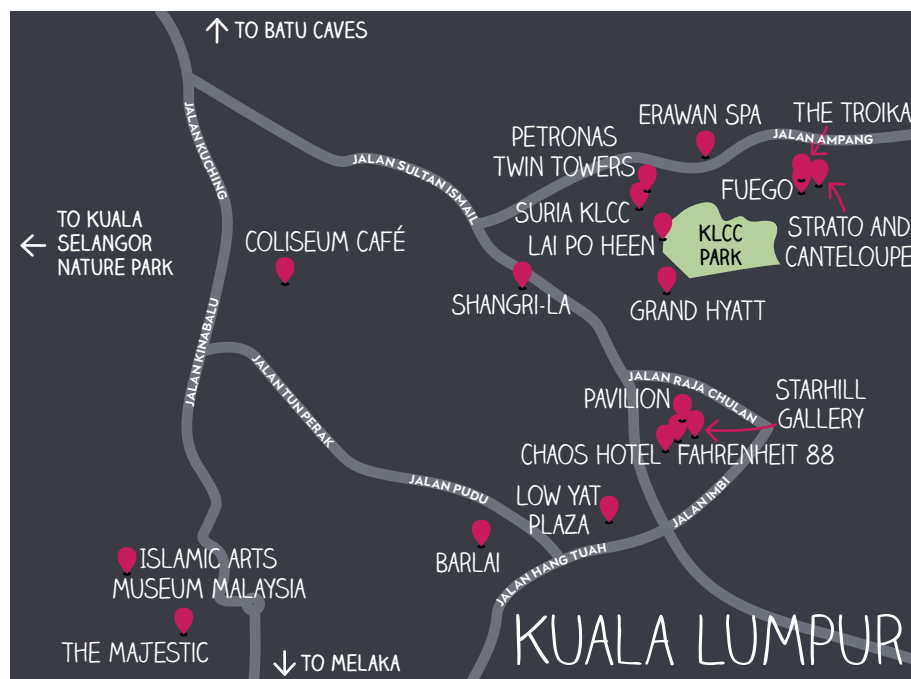
Afternoon Enjoy cocktail hour

Signature cocktails From R83 (RM26)
One of the best ways to understand a city is to explore its back streets – and that's what you have to do to get to the wonderfully understated Barlai (3 Jalan Sin Chew Kee, Bukit Bintang). Ask staff at the nearby Hotel Paloma Inn to point you in the right direction. Try Barlai's signature cocktail, the Bacon Bourbon Bloody Mary.

Evening End your holiday in dining style

Little plates From R80 (RM25)
Toast the final day of your holiday with a glass of red at the Claret wine bar on the 23rd floor of The Troika building. You'll have an uninterrupted view of the Petronas Twin Towers. The food served at the three adjacent restaurants, Fuego, Strato and Canteloupe, is as impressive as the outlook. We ordered from Fuego, and six plates was enough for the two of us. Don't let your last night be the first time you eat here; you'll want to return. troikaskydining.com

PLAN YOUR TRIP



GETTING THERE

The journey from Johannesburg to Kuala Lumpur takes from 12 hours (there are no direct flights). Flights at the end of August 2016 (the dates we looked at for this story) start from R8 329 pp. For comparisons see travelstart.co.za

VISAS

South Africans do not need a visa to enter Malaysia for holiday stays of up to 30 days.

GETTING AROUND

There is a fairly good public transport infrastructure, but it is best avoided during rush hour. Taxis are plentiful and affordable; prices start at about R10 in a red taxi and R20 in a blue taxi. It is illegal for taxis to run without the meter on. myrapid.com.my

WHEN TO GO

Prices for accommodation and travel are higher during Malaysia's peak seasons: December to January, and June to September. March,

April, October, November and December are the wettest months.

THE LANGUAGE

Malay is the official language of Malaysia, but English is widely spoken in Kuala Lumpur.

THE CURRENCY

Malaysia's currency is the ringgit (RM). At the time of going to print RM1 = R3,20. For up-to-date rates check xe.com (better still, download the app – it's probably the most useful app for travellers). Don't bother with exchanging dollars; rather withdraw cash from ATMs.

THE WEATHER

The temperature in Kuala Lumpur is pretty consistent year-round: highs average around 32 degrees Celsius and can peak in the high 30s. Humidity is usually around 80 per cent.

WHERE TO STAY

The luxurious **Shangri-La** is conveniently situated next to the Petronas Twin

Towers. The vast interior space and light make this a very peaceful retreat from the bustle of the city, and its pool offers great views of the towers. From R1 456 per room (sleeps two). shangri-la.com

The chic five-star **Grand Hyatt** is a must for travellers who appreciate beautiful design. Ask for a room that faces the Petronas Twin Towers and fall asleep to the sparkling lights of the city's icon. From R2 383 per room (sleeps two). kualalumpur.grand.hyatt.com

Chaos Hotel is a new establishment in the trendy Bukit Bintang district. The industrial-style rooms are small, but this shouldn't be a problem if you plan to spend most of your time exploring the city. From R506 per room (sleeps two). chaos-hotel.com

Note Accommodation prices are likely to be cheaper if you book through booking.com.

*Prices and conversions correct at time of going to print

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BY MELANIE VAN ZYL



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R969,56,
vermontsales.co.za

Made for compact cameras, the weather- and impact-resistant T-Reign ProCase can be used to protect a variety of goods such as glasses or a GPS. The Velcro straps can be harnessed to a backpack handle, but the kicker here is the retractable tether, that attaches directly to your valuables inside the case, an effective hindrance to pickpockets.



COOL CARRIER

R229,
kaufmannoutdoor.co.za

The Kaufmann Outdoor insulated backpack cooler bag is compact with adjustable padded straps. It's perfect for carrying while you find a spot on the beach. It fits two two-litre bottles of Coke and has an extra storage pouch.

THE GREEN LIGHT

R330,
naturallysolar.co.za

Providing up to 12 hours of light with a single day's charge, the Go Buddy is a tough, splash-proof lantern. From the makers of Solar Buddy, this new lantern is more compact and designed with hikers and travellers in mind. The slim stainless steel stand makes it easy to pop up and the Velcro strap allows it to attach to objects, such as a backpack or beach umbrella, for optimal charging.



BEACH BRAAI

R600, thebraaitool.co.za

It's hard to imagine more multifunctional tongs than The Braai Tool – handcrafted and locally designed. The hinged tongs split at the base to form a knife and fork to cut meat on the grid and are slightly curved to use as serving spoons or spatulas. There's also a built-in bottle opener.

Did you know?

Safe sun time is area specific – in Durban's summer, safe exposure is only 10 minutes, after which damage occurs. An SPF of 15 means you're protected for 15 times the safe sun time – in other words for two and a half hours



GOOD CALL

R7999, be-akin.co.za

With a waterproof rating of IP68, the slim yet rugged Aspera R6 Android smartphone can withstand sandy and wet conditions. It has a 4,5-inch HD display, hardy Gorilla Glass, a rubberised shock-resistant body and a 13-megapixel camera that can snap 99 continuous shots.

WIN!

A pair of rugged, leather-top Wolverine Black Ledge hiking shoes.

Read our review upfront on page 25, visit getaway.co.za/competitions and answer the question below to win these adventure kicks worth R1 200.

Q: Are these hiking shoes waterproof?



THROW IN THE TOWEL

From R199, capeunionmart.co.za

The K-Way Microfibre Trek Towel is up to six times lighter than a conventional towel, and dries as quick as rain in the desert. It's available in three sizes.



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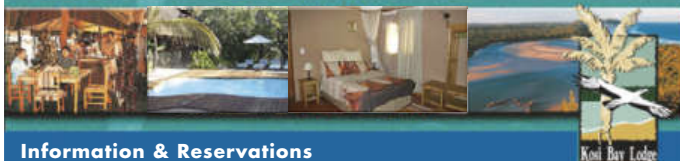
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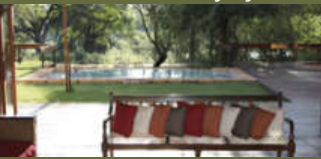
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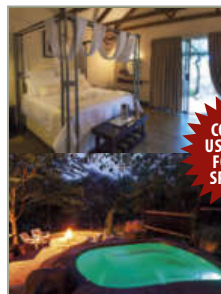


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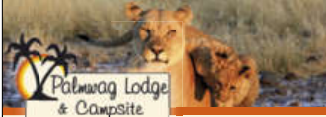


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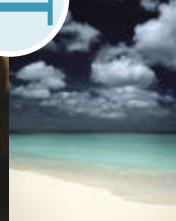
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GUIDE

SHORT BREAK

MZANSI DESTINATIONS

After the Falls

VICTORIA FALLS IS ARGUABLY THE BIGGEST TOURIST ATTRACTION IN AFRICA BUT IT'S STILL POSSIBLE TO FIND A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE. KATI AULD TELLS US HOW.
PHOTOGRAPHS BY TYSON JOPSON

A person wearing a red shirt, blue shorts, and a backpack stands on a rocky outcrop, looking out over the Victoria Falls. The falls are a wide, powerful cascade of water falling into a deep gorge. The surrounding cliffs are steep and covered in lush green vegetation. The scene is misty and atmospheric, with sunlight filtering through the clouds.

A steep descent leads to this view of the Batoka Gorge. For Stuart Tshuma, and many other guides in Vic Falls, this is just another day in the office.

‘Come, I will show you the biggest tree in the world!’ I am doubtful about this claim. Felix has already tried to interest me in a \$500 billion note, two small wooden hippos, and a tour of the Falls. At this stage, if I told Felix that I wanted a tour of the Honourable President Mugabe’s personal abode, I have a feeling he’d just beam at me and make a plan.

The Falls have been cutting a swathe through the basalt of Batoka Gorge for at least a hundred thousand years, but Victoria Falls, the town, only sprung up as an afterthought to support the tourism industry that bloomed after the white man saw the water. That is to say that for the last 150 years, tourism has been the only industry of Victoria Falls. Put on a blindfold and go stumbling down the main street and you’ll bump into three tour guides and a tourism office before you’ve taken 20 steps. Most of the time you can’t hear the sound of the falls from town over the incessant buzzing of the sight-seeing helicopters. Between the bungee jumping, canopy tours and bridge swinging, there are parts of the gorge that look more like an aerial highway than a natural wonderland. If you are able to leave Vic Falls without a Nyaminyami necklace (a river god carved out of soapstone) you are either invisible or very, very good at giving rejection. You don’t even have to buy them – they seem to proliferate of their own accord, self-replicating in a kind of occult mitosis. You will find a Nyaminyami in your pillowcase three weeks after you have left Vic Falls.

You can’t blame the salespeople for their persistence – this is overlander town. Tourists aren’t individuals here, but mostly arrive in herds to graze and snap photos for a day or two before mooching onwards on their migration across Africa. Aggressive opportunism is a good business strategy – but it does leave one feeling a bit set upon and catcalled. How does one have a genuine experience in a town that’s always glancing at your wallet?



ABOVE This steampunk fellow watches over patrons at The Lookout Café. **RIGHT** Vic Falls Backpackers is filled with hammocks, tourists, and quirky signage. **BELOW** Mama Africa Eating House often hosts musicians in the evenings.





It's something I'm pondering in the pre-dawn light the next morning. The Vic Falls National Park is open from 6am, and it's a great time to visit – not only do you get to enjoy the sunrise over one of the world's most spectacular natural sights, but you'll have it mostly to yourself. The car park is empty, apart from the heavy raincoats hanging on the gates. They seem misplaced in the cloudless sky.

Their purpose becomes apparent quickly, as you enter the park. Lush, obscenely green rainforest prevails in every direction, hopped

the second. And the third. And the fourth. There are 19 viewpoints in all, little turn-offs from the paved pathway that winds along the precipice, sometimes with nothing but a shin-height fence made from thorn trees separating you from infinity below. I may have had a wobble myself, trying to get the best angle for a selfie. The Zim Parks Board's trust in the self-preservation instincts of tourists would not stand up, I can't help but think, in health-and-safety-obsessed Europe.

By the time you get past viewpoint 15, and out of the bulk of the forest, you'll see

ABOVE The wilderness of the Zambezi National Park will take you by surprise, even though sounds of partying can sometimes reach from the Zambian side. **BELOW** Elephants are plentiful, even coming into town occasionally.

'The might of the Zambezi flails over the lip, pounding the rocks below like it's owed money'

up on chlorophyll and the constant fine vapour being churned up by the Falls. It's the equivalent of having a diligent person with a plant mister on 24-hour duty. Overhanging African ebony boughs drip with condensation, and it feels warmer, clammy.

It's not the traditional view of a waterfall, where you round the corner and there it is, spilling down from a mountain, maybe into a pool that you could have a dip in. It's a violent tear through the earth, over a kilometre long, like a freeze-frame from an apocalyptic earthquake. The might of the Zambezi flails over the lip, pounding the rocks below like it's owed money. The only thing that's better than the first viewpoint is

why the raincoats are so essential. The mist from earlier has ganged up with its buddies and formed a torrential party. It's always raining here.

You'll leave the gates feeling exhilarated and, if you plan it right and spend enough time in the park, like you've gotten your money's worth.

There are as many ways to experience the Falls as there are kinds of people. Adventure junkies come for white-water rafting and bungee jumping; those who prefer their hair unruffled and their martinis shaken can be treated to crisp tablecloths and impeccable service at any number of five-star resorts. But no matter your budget, the best way to >



BELOW The 100-year old Victoria Falls Bridge is an attraction in itself, although bungee-jumping off it will cost you about R2 110 (US\$160). **RIGHT** I'd instead recommend the half-day adventure of white-water rafting which is roughly the same price.



experience Vic Falls is to actively push back against the cookie-cutter instinct.

Rather than the 'cage dive with crocs!' package hawked around town, find genuine wilderness in the Zambezi National Park. It's only about five kilometres out of town, but also gives you the opportunity to camp wild in the proximity of the Big Five, at beautiful riverside stands under mahogany trees. Beware though: the signposting leaves much to be desired, and those suffering from any degree of bat phobia will not feel particularly comfortable using the long-drop toilets. For me, looking down from a rooftop tent at a wet hippo, shiny under a full moon, mooching over my ground-sheet far outweighed these gripes. If that's not your style, small and inexpensive guest lodges can be found too, after a bit of digging – Pamusha Lodge is the best of the bunch.

There's also more to the gorge than white-water rafting – depending on the season. As the water drops, the number of accessible hikes increases: the Boiling Pot Hike is one that I'll tackle next time. On my last day in Victoria Falls, I hiked down into the gorge



The thrill of being at the bottom of the Falls is incredible

'As the water drops, the number of accessible hikes increases'

with a local operator, Raw Adrenaline. The guide made sure we had the correct park license and warned about where the slippery spots were as we scrambled over the jagged black rock edges lining the water. Sitting at the bottom of the gorge, soft-drink in hand, I watched the water tumble on one side and bungee-mad tourists fling themselves off a bridge on the other. I felt a bit superior. They've just been hustled here by a tour group manager and probably don't know that this view exists! But I guess that's the thing about Vic Falls. It's magnificent. Whichever way you look at it. **6**

PLAN YOUR TRIP ➔

GETTING THERE

Victoria Falls is about 74 kilometres east of the Kazungula border between Botswana and Zimbabwe. Flights from Joburg cost from R4 500 return, if you book far enough in advance. If you're driving from South Africa, the shortest way is to go through Botswana on the A1. Take the A3 from Francistown, and change to the A33 at Nata, which will take you to the border. After immigration, stay on the M10 to go straight to Victoria Falls.

DO THIS

Adventure sports are a big deal in Vic Falls. You can book bungee-jumping or bridge-swinging with any of numerous operators, but I'd recommend Raw Adrenaline for river-based activities. They're owned by local Zimbabweans who're passionate about providing personalised bespoke trips. There are a number of options depending on the size of the river, from white-water rafting to rock-climbing. +263-772-368-010, rawadrenaline.org

Hike the Batoka Gorge The options for routes are also dependent on the season and water height, but a basic hike down into the gorge will cost about R850, including park fees, with Raw Adrenaline. There's also the Boiling Pot Hike which is about a three-hour route under the Victoria Falls Bridge. R765 pp with Shearwater Victoria Falls, +263-134-4471, shearwatervictoriafalls.com

Visit Victoria Falls National Park It's expensive at R265 pp for SADC residents, and it's a single-entry permit paid at the gate. The best way to get your money's worth? Go early, take your time meandering along the viewpoints, and then skip away from heinously overpriced Rainforest Café in favour of a coffee at The Lookout Café.

Ride a bike across the Victoria Falls Bridge This is one of the cheapest, and

most enjoyable, ways to spend a day in Vic Falls. There are a number of operators that do cycle tours, but I'd recommend renting a bike and going on your own adventure. R65 an hour from Royalty Linkerz, conveniently located on the main street. +263-773-537-602 royaltytravelvicfalls.com

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If you have over R2 500 (US\$200) to spend per person per night, Vic Falls is your oyster. If you're looking for accommodation that's clean, affordable and not wall-to-wall in frilled sateen however, you'll find it a harder mussel to crack. Note that here the B&Bs are called 'lodges'.

Victoria Falls Backpackers It's a little out of the way, but this is a small, quirky backpackers with shade, hammocks and a pool. They have small en-suite chalets for R790 per room (sleeps two), non en-suite for R660 per room (sleeps two), permanent tented rooms for R530 per room (sleeps two), and dorm rooms for R240 pp. +263-134-2209, victoriafallsbackpackers.com

Pamusha Lodge is one

of the few Zimbabwean-owned budget guest lodges in Vic Falls. For about R1 282 per room (sleeps two), you can get a decent en-suite double room with air con, DSTV, and breakfast included. +263-779-369-160, pamushalodgevicfalls.com

Amadeus Garden Guesthouse is a bit more pricey at about R1 300 pp sharing B&B but the rooms are larger and a little more upmarket. Rooms 1 to 6 are set around a sparkling pool – another four are at the back. +263-134-2261, amadeusgarden.com

Zambezi National Park is a glorious spot, whether for a day trip or camping overnight. Chundu One is my pick for the best of the two public campsites. Entry to the park is R160 pp, plus a R130 vehicle fee. For camping it's R530 pp, including entrance and conservation fees. Book through The ZimParks & Wildlife Management Authority. +263-134-2294, zimparcs.org

TO EAT

Mama Africa Eating House is the best place to pick up a beef *ndiuraye* – literally, 'kill me beef'.

They also do a damn fine chicken stew. +263-134-1725

Lola's Tapas & Bar is good. The food includes chicken melts, steak and African-European fusion tapas. There's also Wi-Fi. +263-134-2994

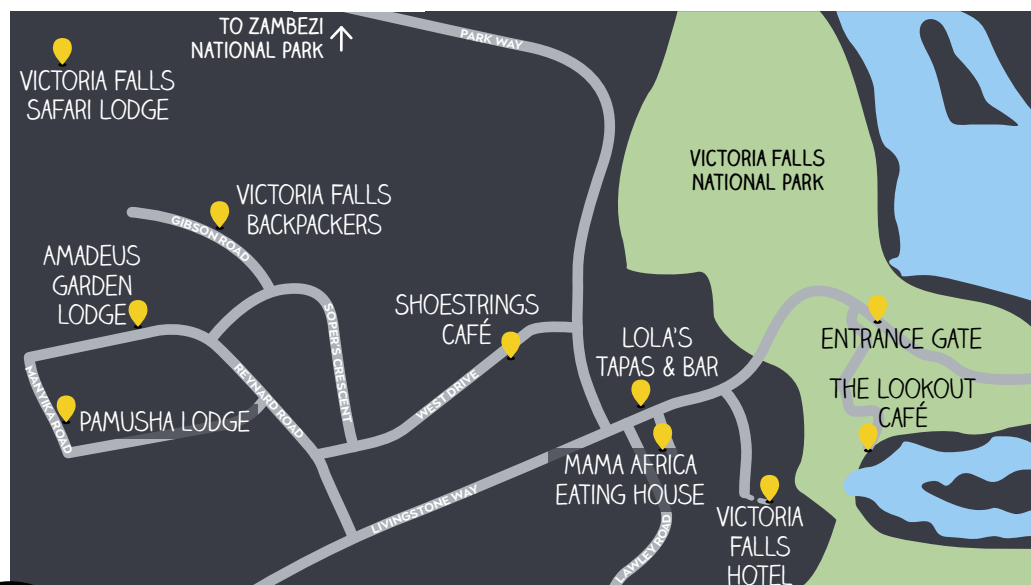
The Lookout Café can have sluggish service – but that's standard for an establishment that has a monopoly on the best view in town. The balcony hanging right over the gorge is the absolute perfect spot for a sundowner. +263-134-2013

Victoria Falls Safari Lodge has a balcony bar overlooking a far-reaching plateau and a man-made waterhole: you'll easily spot crocodiles and vultures from your perch. +263-134-3211

Victoria Falls Hotel is an icon of a bygone era. Have a gin and tonic in the bar or dine at Stanley's Terrace, overlooking the lawns. +263-134-4751

Shoestrings Café is part of Shoestrings Backpackers & Bar, the biggest party in town. It gets loud (you need high tolerance for the top hits of Nirvana) but they do a great wood-fired pizza. +263-134-6879

*Prices and conversions correct at time of going to print



WIN

A TRIP TO VIC FALLS The Jameson Vic Falls Carnival takes place over New Year's Eve. This year's headliners are Mango Groove, GoodLuck, and Zimbabwe's own Mokoomba. One lucky reader will win double tickets for an overland adventure across Southern Africa to the festival! The prize, worth R20 000, includes accommodation, tickets to the festival and activities. Enter at getaway.co.za/competitions. Follow the carnival on social media #JVFC2015.

IMAGINE

WHERE NEXT?

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Rob (aka Twakkie) relives a childhood holiday with his own family

13 minutes...

That's how long Rob van Vuuren spent painstakingly removing acacia thorns from the feet of his four-year-old daughter. Although he believes this is all part of the quintessential experience of holidaying in the great outdoors, such perspective failed to convince his crying child. Here, the famed Twakkie – half of Corné and Twakkie from *The Most Amazing Show* – is found trundling with his wife and daughter in that glorious mode of transport, the caravan. Rob's funny account of the adventure features failed tent erections and rugby ball-shaped camp managers. South Africa's numerous reserves and national parks provided idyllic camping spots and the family lounged on the banks of the Breede River, watched sunsets in the Swartberg and wandered through forests. It was a time of simple pleasures: barefoot games, birdwatching and braaivleis; a family holiday of the best kind. Read more in next month's edition of *Getaway*.



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